LETTERS

CONTAINING

A SKETCH

OF THE

POLITICS OF FRANCE.

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CONTAINING

A SKETCH

OF THE

SCENES WHICH PASSED IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF FRANCE DURING THE TYRANNY OF ROBESPIERRE,

AND

Of the Events which took place in Paris on the 28th of July 1794.

BY

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LETTER I.

Paris.

MY DEAR SIR,

MY pen, wearied of tracing ſucceſſive pictures of human crimes and human calamity, purſues its taſk with reluctance; while my heart ſprings forward to that fairer epocha which now beams upon the friends of liberty — that epocha when the French republic has caſt aſide her diſmal ſhroud, ſtained with the blood of the patriot, and bathed with the tears of the mourner; and preſents the bleſſed images of juſtice and humanity healing the deep wounds of her afflicted boſom: when the laws of mercy are but the echo

of the public opinion, of that loud cry for the triumph of innocence, of that horror of tyranny which hangs upon every lip, and thrills at every heart. The generous affections, the tender sympathies so long repressed by the congealing stupefaction of terror, burst forth with uncontrolable energy; and the enthusiasm of humanity has taken place of the gloomy terror of despair, as suddenly as, when the massy ice dissolves in the regions of the north, summer awakens her clear rills, her fresh foliage and her luxuriant flowers. Not to have suffered persecution during the tyranny of Robespierre, is now to be disgraced; and it is expected of all those who have escaped that they should assign some good reason, or offer some satisfactory apology for their suspicious exemption from imprisonment. An ecrou * is considered as a certificate

* An extract from the Jailor's Register.

of

of *civism*, and is a neceſſary introduction to good ſociety. But happy, thrice happy is he who has been immured in a dungeon, and has been unfortunate beyond the common lot! To him the ſocial circle liſtens with attention, for him the tender beauty wakes her ſofteſt ſmile ---for him await all private and public honours; he may lay claim to the poſſeſſion of the higheſt offices of the ſtate, and may aſpire in proportion as he has ſuffered. The tide of ſympathy and compaſſion has indeed run ſo high, that it has been obſerved to produce a ſort of affectation of complaint in ordinary minds; and as it was ſaid in the departments after the taking of the Baſtile, that every Pariſian who came into the country, declared himſelf one of the conquerors, and moſt of them had even ſeized De Launy by the ſhoulder, ſo at preſent if we were to lend our belief to

all those who tell us they were on the fatal list destined for the guillotine on the 11th of Thermidor, the day after Robespierre's execution, we must suppose that his appointed hecatomb for that day consisted, instead of his ordinary sacrifice, of half Paris at least. But after all the cruelties that have passed, how soothing is the moment when pity becomes the fashion, and when tyranny is so execrated that to have been its victim is glory! The tears of compassion now flow even for those objects whom once to commiserate was death. A republican may now, unsuspected of royalism, lament the fate of the innocent and interesting sufferer at the Temple; she, whose birth-day was a day of triumph, whose cradle was strewed with flowers, and who now, immured within a living tomb, remains the sole survivor of her unfortunate family. The prospect of her speedy release from

captivity gives perhaps as general plea-ſure at Paris as at Vienna. This ſympathy is not confined to thoſe perſons who wiſh to replace her family upon the throne; for cruelty is no longer the order of the day, and the moſt determined lover of democracy may now, without offending againſt its laws, profeſs his pity for a blooming beauty confined in gloomy towers, although ſhe happens to be a princeſs. That fair mourner, while ſhe waits the hour of liberty and happineſs, is no longer encloſed in diſmal ſolitude within the walls of her apartment. For ſome weeks paſt ſhe has ſpent as much of the day as ſhe chooſes in the gardens of the Temple, and her confinement has been cheered by the ſociety of an amiable and accompliſhed lady, madame de Chatrenne, to whom ſhe is much attached, and who cheats the hours of their length by teaching her Italian and drawing. She often

enquires after her unhappy family, of whose fate, except that of her father, she is altogether ignorant; but every enquiry she makes concerning them, madame de Chatrenne is obliged to answer in conformity to the orders she has received from the committee of general safety, by telling her, " this is a secret of state." And surely it is merciful to conceal from her events which have passed, till she is placed in a situation where her tears will be wiped away with the tenderness of assiduous attention, and the sympathy of congenial sorrow.

Paris once more reassumes a gay aspect, the poor again have bread, and the rich again display the appendages of wealth. The processions of death which once darkened the streets, are now succeeded by carriages elegant in simplicity, though not decorated with the blazonry of arms, or the lace of liveries. The cheerfulness habitual to parisian physiog-

nomy, again lights up its reviving look; and the quick ſtep, the joyous ſmile, the ſmart repartee, the airy geſture, have ſucceeded the diſmal reſerve, and the trembling circumſpection which ſo ill ſuited the national character. With the careleſs ſimplicity of children who after the rigours of ſchool haſten to their ſports; the Pariſians, ſhaking off the hideous remembrance of the paſt, fly to the ſcenes of pleaſure.

The Thuilleries and the Champs-Elyſées are again crowded with the ſprightly circles ſeated on each ſide of their broad alleys, and beneath the ſhade of their majeſtic trees. At the period of great ſcarcity of bread, when crowds aſſembled every morning at the doors of the bakers ſhops, the people called it going *à la queue*. Thoſe *queues*, or ranks, in ſearch of bread have long ſince ceaſed, and are ſucceeded by *queues* in ſearch of pleaſure. There is a *queue* every even-

ing at every theatre; and the late persecution of the roman catholic church having produced the usual effect of persecution, there is a *queue* at the churches every sunday to hear mass. For some time during the spring, there was a violent schism at Paris between those who chose to make a holiday of sunday, and those who observed the decadi as a festival. The town was nearly equally divided between what were called the *Dominicans*, and the *Decadists*. One half of the tradesmen shut up their shops, and one half of the mechanics refused to work on one day, the other half on the other. At length the matter has been compromised in the manner most agreeable to a people so fond of amusement as the Parisians, by making merry both on sunday and decadi. Each day is become a holiday, on which churches, theatres, and public gardens are alike crowded, and all the world appears satisfied.

The

The women indulge in their dreſs the full extent of female caprice, as well as extravagance. This day the peruque blonde* converts the dark-complexioned nymph into a fair beauty; tomorrow ſhe reaſſumes her jetty locks, and thus varies her attractions.

"How many pictures of one nymph we view,
"All how unlike each other, all how true!"

Some lances were ſhivered lately between the lovers of the Marſeillois hymn, and the *amateurs* of the reveil du peuple; but hoſtilities have now ceaſed in the ſame manner as between ſunday and decadi, by making it a rule to ſing both.

In the mean time literature and the arts, covered with ſack-cloth and aſhes during the reign of our jacobin vandals, again revive, the national library offers every other day its treaſures of literature to the public, and its long galleries and ample tables are filled with perſons of

* A light-haired periwig.

both ſexes, who, amidſt the ſilence which is there obſerved, enjoy the charms of meditation, or the pleaſure of ſtudy.

The noble gallery of the national muſeum filled with the maſter-pieces of art, is crowded three times a decade with citizens of all claſſes, the poor as well as the rich; who cannot fail to humanize their ſouls, as well as improve their taſte by ſuch contemplation. The celebrated ſculptured horſes of Marly now decorate the entrance of the Champs-Elyſées; the porticoes of the Louvre are filled with ſtatues; the public walks are preſerved with attentive care; and Paris, ſo lately beſmeared with blood—Paris, the refuge of barbariſm, and the den of carnage, once more excites the ideas of taſte, elegance, refinement, and happineſs.

But whither am I wandering? Before we reach thoſe fair and cheerful regions, we muſt paſs through the nethermoſt abyſs

"Of

"Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
"Wide on the wasteful deep; with him enthroned
"Sat sable-vested Night, and by them stand
"Orcus and Ades; and the dreaded name
"Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,
"And Tumult and Confusion all embroiled,
"And Discord with a thousand various mouths—
"Alone, and without guide, half-lost, I seek
the readiest path."

In the conclusion of my last letter I mentioned that plan of spreading devastation, through the wide territory of the Vendée, which had entered into the councils of the committee of public safety. The sad task remains of relating how successfully they accomplished their purpose. The character of the Vendean has been always represented as simple, humane and rustic; the dupe of the priest, and the slave of the noble. Had the convention, instead of sending the sword, sent peace; instead of bayonets and soldiers, had they dispatched apostles with missals of republicanism,

there is little doubt but this numerous and valuable part of community would long ſince have formed an integral part of the republic. "Theſe people," one of the mountain deputies, Dubois Crancé, obſerves, in ſpeaking of the Vendeans, "are the moſt reſpectable I have ever known; they attend to juſtice and reaſon, when you ſpeak to them with mildneſs and humanity." Chodieu, who was another of the jacobinical miſſionaries, tells us, that "nothing was wanting but to ſpread inſtruction through that country, to open the eyes of the people, and unmaſk and puniſh thoſe who miſled them." And Lequinio, who had ſo far deſtroyed his "prejudices" and his ſhame as to write a hiſtory to the convention of the maſſacres he was about to commit near Rochelle, and of his familiar revels with the executioner, informs us that had diſcreet and rational men been ſent to preach the doctrines of liberty, to de-

velop the principles of moral and political philosophy, to invite the people to enquiry, to enlighten their minds and interest their feelings, that fanaticism which had hitherto kept them in ignorance would have disappeared, and the love of liberty would have taken place of their attachment to the debasing system under which they had lived.

The evidence of this man will not be suspected of partiality to that unhappy race, when we find him with all the frigid composure of a calculator reasoning hypothetically, that, if the population which remains amounted only to thirty or forty thousand souls—certainly the quickest way to finish the war would be to cut their throats. "So," adds he, "I thought at first, but the population is immense, it amounts to four hundred thousand men.—If there be no hopes of success in any other mode, without doubt we must cut the throats of the whole,

did

did they amount to five hundred thousand men; I however am far from thinking it necessary——but—we must make no prisoners, and wherever we find men armed or unarmed, if there appear any hostile disposition, shoot them without any farther examination!"

When a man, who writes philosophical works to destroy prejudices *, tells us, that the best practical mode of destroying them is to destroy those who cherish them, he instructs us only in the art of the executioner. It is melancholy to see into what monsters men may be transformed by the possession of power, or the grovelling passion of fear. Lequinio weighs with calmness the advantage or disadvantage of butchering five hundred thousand men; and Garat and Lindet, men of temperate and philoso-

* Lequinio is the author of a philosophical work intitled "Prejudices Destroyed."

phical

phical minds, become actors in the 31st of May.

It is pretended that the plan of the committee was in reality that of the general extermination of the inhabitants of the Vendée. Lequinio hints at this design several times, and often deliberates how far it would be advantageous in certain circumstances to continue the system of destruction; and a writer whom I have already mentioned, Vilate, a confident of Barrere, Robespierre, St. Just, and other conspirators, tells us, that it was a serious object of discussion with these great legislators, how to diminish the population of France in the shortest given time. Rousseau asserts, that it is the perfection of a state, when every citizen has enough, and no one too much; and the provident policy of these reformers, it seems, amounted to this conclusion, " that as in the present state of property, which was but in few hands, the

majority

majority could be in poffeffion but of a little, and where this inequality of fortune exifted, there could be no equality of rights, the only way of deftroying this inequality was to let the government feize on the whole; that in order to execute this plan all the great capitalifts muft be facrificed, that the reft might be induced to yield up their poffeffions more readily; that a certain depopulation became alfo neceffary, in order that France might furnifh from its own produce enough to feed its inhabitants; and that even after the extirpation of the people of fortune, thofe incumbrances of the foil, if the population fhould ftill exceed the produce, means muft be found, to ufe Barrere's words, "to fweep away the rubbifh," fo that a certain number only fhould remain. In the mean time the conventional arms were every where unfuccefsful. This ill fuccefs was probably at firft, as I have already mentioned,

a part

a part of the plan of the committee of public safety, in order to complete the ruin of the party of the Gironde; and those who were eye witnesses of the events that took place furnish us with additional causes that finish the discovery of all those mysteries of which Philippeaux complains.

"The generals of this army," says Lequinio, a man not at all to be suspected of affection to the cause of the royalists from what has just been said, "have from the beginning made this war an object of speculation and particular interest." Their immense pay and funds for extraordinary expences, their calculations on the produce of pillage, the licence they gave the soldiers to excuse their own rapacity, increased the love of plunder, and destroyed all discipline. This habit of pillage not only introduced disorder into the army, but prompted to the commission of every other crime.

"The

"The most shocking barbarities," says Lequinio, "presented themselves at every corner. We have seen republican soldiers shoot or stab rebel women in the public roads. We have seen others carrying infants torn from the breast, on the ends of their bayonets, or the pikes that had pierced with the same blow the child and the mother.

"All these horrors," adds Lequinio, "have sharpened resentment, and increased the number of the malcontents, who were compelled to acknowledge that our troops often displayed less virtue than the rebels, of whom some, it is true, committed massacres; but the chiefs had always the policy to preach virtue, and to affect a sort of indulgence and generosity towards our prisoners." His colleague Chodieu declares also, "however gross and superstitious our governors have been pleased to paint our brethren, we might have easily succeeded in bring-

ing them within the pale of liberty." The Vendeans, it is certain, ſpared nothing to draw over the republicans to their ſide, and ſent them back on their ſimple parole not to bear arms againſt the king or religion. The convention anſwered this humane policy by their proclamation to rob and maſſacre; and all who came in the way of their troops were robbed and maſſacred.

Municipalities, with their civil officers in republican coſtume, and who were received with all the appearances of fraternity, have been murdered the hour after. Cavaliers armed and equipped, who had travelled many miles to ſurrender themſelves, had been ſhot without mercy. That ſuch a conduct ſhould increaſe the armies of the royaliſts was natural; and however well inclined a part of the inhabitants might have been to republican principles, driven to deſpair by the atrocious and barbarous policy of the con-

vention,

vention, they were compelled to take an active part with the royalists.

In order to exterminate the inhabitants of the Vendée, it was necessary to destroy their abodes. Towns and villages were delivered to the flames; the peopled streets and the insulated cottages were doomed alike to devastation; and so great was the fury of those messengers of destruction, which Lequinio calls "les égarements des patriotes," that they destroyed immense quantities of corn and forage, not only driving the inhabitants to the necessity of increasing the royalist army from want, but depriving themselves of those resources which were necessary to their own existence.

These are not the tales of the cruelties of Roman emperors and tyrants in the history of martyrs. They are horrors which have passed at our very doors, and of which we daily saw the witnesses and sufferers; and some of the great actors

tors in thoſe ſcenes of ruin and deſolation, till their crimes were expiated by their puniſhment after the events of the firſt of Prairial, continued to live amongſt us; they paraded our ſtreets, they ſat in our aſſemblies, they raiſed their audacious fronts in the legiſlature.

It was not only to the ſavage ſoldier that the execution of this plan of extermination was committed: the convention entruſted to its own members the ſuperintendence of this devaſtating ſyſtem. We have ſeen the fidelity with which it was executed by Collot d'Herbois at Lyons. The Vendée was not yet ſufficiently puniſhed, and Carrier was ſent thither—Carrier! "at the name of Carrier," ſays the eloquent reporter of the Robeſpierrian correſpondence, "the ſmoking chart of the Vendée unrolls itſelf beneath our eyes. Thouſands of ſalamanders from amidſt the furnaces of the Vendée feed the fire which conſumes

the republic. You hear the crackling of the flame which devours both manufactures and hamlets, cities and men; the ruins of castles mingle with the wrecks of cottages; melancholy and deplorable equality, which exists only in desolation! I see by the glare of the blaze, those who have kindled it, darting across the burning beams of falling houses, like birds of prey, on the treasures they contain. Even the asylum of patriotism is not respected; the enemies taken with arms in their hands, and those who lay them down, are precipitated into the same gulph; the common foe, and the friend who leads our soldiers to victory, who procures them by sure indications the means of necessary subsistence, perish alike; and the same respect is paid to the patriot and the rebel."

If we cannot hear the name of Carrier without the strongest sensations of horror, will not our judgment look somewhat

further

further than this ferocious inſtrument of guilt? The *whole* of the committee of public ſafety were his direct accomplices, and who will abſolve the convention? Carrier's inſtructions arrive. "We have received your letter," ſay the committee, "which gives us true ſatisfaction. We conjure thee to go to Nantes immediately. We ſend thee a decree which charges thee to purge that city. It muſt be emptied without delay. Liberty never trifles. We can be humane when we are conquerors." What ſervices Carrier had already rendered to the committee, does not appear; but they found in him, no doubt, a mind ſufficiently capacious for wickedneſs to ſerve their purpoſes.

Carrier arrived at Nantes the 9th of October. The prologue to the tragedy had already been delivered. Gentin, the ſecretary of the national commiſſion, had already written to the intrepid moun-

taineers

taineers forming the committee of inſpection at Nantes: "Republican brethren, the repreſentatives ſend me the incloſed pieces, which I haſten to convey to you. Examine, and ſtrike hard and quick, like true revolutioniſts, otherwiſe I ſhall not be pleaſed. You want arms, you told me yeſterday, to execute your orders; ſpeak, aſk, and you ſhall have every thing—military force, commiſſaries, couriers, clerks, and ſpies, if it be neceſſary. Speak one word, one word only, and I will engage that you ſhall be furniſhed inſtantly. Adieu all. I love you all. I ſhall always love you, becauſe your principles are mine. Think of a veſſel or houſes proper to form a priſon; ſecure depoſitories, &c. &c."

Such are the firſt inſtructions for Nantes. Without its walls murder had already begun its work; the peaceable inhabitants of a village near Cliſſin, with the inſtruments of huſbandry in their hands,

hands, were maſſacred by Luſignan, a general of brigade, with other peaſants who had been employed for ſome weeks in ſupplying Nantes with proviſions. In the adjoining communes, near a thouſand men and women had been ſhot without examination, and without trial; and of theſe maſſacres two commiſſaries only had been the ſuperintendants and directors. Carrier remained but a day or two at Nantes. He nevertheleſs ſtaid long enough to open his commiſſion, which conſiſted in the moſt atrocious invectives and execrations againſt the inhabitants, and particularly againſt the tradeſmen and merchants; declaring that, if he did not receive liſts of charges againſt the latter, he would in a ſhort time arreſt the whole, and then ſhoot and guillotine one perſon in ten. After having made them this paternal viſit, and given his inſtructions, he took his leave

 for

for a few days to go and electrify the city of Rennes.

It was at this period that the committee of public safety, through the organ of Barrere, published the happy accomplishment of their prophetic decree, that the "Vendée existed no longer." At Paris, as no one dared to doubt of the infallibility of the committee, or suspect its veracity, we imagined that the royalists had been completely crushed, because the committee informed the convention that the Vendée existed no more. We learned, however, very soon, what this annihilation of the Vendée meant. It was not altogether one of those agreeable figures of rhetoric with which Barrere was wont to harangue the convention, since there was some truth in the declaration, which we did not discover at the first glance: for the great army of the royalists had indeed evacu-

ated the ſeat of the war in the Vendée, if that could be called an evacuation which was a triumphal march acroſs the Loire. This paſſage was accompliſhed without any loſs, and the royaliſt army remained on the northern ſide without moleſtation for three days; after which they began their march towards the ſea-coaſts, acroſs the departments which form the eaſtern part of the province of Brittany.

It might have been expected that their paſſage would have been oppoſed, or their march haraſſed: and that this did not happen was another of Philippeaux's myſteries; but the royaliſts were ſuffered to take uninterrupted poſſeſſion of the country as far as Laval, having ſurrounded four thouſand men who were ſent in purſuit of them, and whom they cut in pieces; the ſans-culotte general Olignier, who was ordered to march againſt the royaliſts, and protect the pa-

triots, having thought it more prudent to keep at ten leagues diſtance.

From Laval they marched to Vitri, a place which was repreſented as a moſt advantageous and formidable paſs, of which alſo they took poſſeſſion, as the conventional generaliſſimo had effected its evacuation, though he had every means of reſiſtance, and might have ſtopped the march of the enemy, ſince the place was fortified, had a garriſon of four thouſand men, and was proviſioned for more than a month. This place, which the inhabitants, after the departure of the garriſon, would have defended, if they had not been forbidden, was taken; and the royaliſts, after defeating ſome other corps which were ſent ſucceſſively againſt them, marched on without further reſiſtance to the coaſts through Avranches to Grandville.

Grandville is a ſea-port town on that

part of the coaſt which fronts the iſlands of Jerſey and Guernſey, ſtretching north and ſouth, and forming a right angle with the coaſt that goes towards St. Maloes and Breſt, of which the famous mountain of St. Michel is the point. It is the only port on that coaſt; and the poſſeſſion of it would have given the royaliſts the advantage of immediate communication with their allies, the emigrants and the Engliſh, and the means of ſecuring the moſt effective ſuccour.

As they had paſſed through a large tract of country with ſo little interruption, they did not expect much reſiſtance where the means of making it were ſo few; and therefore concluded they could repulſe the garriſon of Grandville which had marched out to meet them, and make themſelves maſters of that important place as eaſily as they had gained the reſt. They took poſſeſſion of the ſuburbs; but when they prepared to ſcale

the walls, they found a reſiſtance which they had little expected. The firſt hero that fell was the mayor in the habit of his office, who had taken the command of the principal poſt. The royaliſt artillery made great ravages, and the houſes in the ſuburbs afforded the aſſailants conſiderable ſhelter. The beſieged ſet fire to theſe houſes, and the attack became ſtill more deſperate; the royaliſts were often driven down the ramparts, and the rocks that overhung the town ſtreamed with blood.

This battle laſted near thirty hours; and I have been told by one of my acquaintance who fought on the republican ſide, that the ſpectacle was truly ſublime. Not only every man, but every woman and every child, was that day a warrior: the artillery was ſerved by the children, who, forming chains from the arſenal to the ramparts, conveyed the ammunition, while the women were

em-

employed in assisting their husbands, brothers, and fathers, and preventing the flames of the houses in the suburbs from communicating to those in the town.

The royalists were at length repulsed with great loss by this handful of republicans, and all the important advantages which they reasonably expected from this expedition failed. They were forced to retreat back to the Loire, and in this retreat they might have been completely cut off: but the cowardly and debasing genius of sans-culottism again presided; for Rossignol kept at seven leagues distance with his army at the moment of the perilous passage at Dol; and when the royalists had effected it, he brought up his troops, who were completely routed, and driven back to Rennes.

The royalist army in their retreat laid siege to Angers, which was defended

bravely by the garrifon, and the inhabitants, in the abfence of Roffignol. At Meaux, the royalifts were defeated with great lofs by Wefterman. Having divided themfelves into two columns, they attempted to pafs the Loire at Chateaubriant and Ancenis; but their good fortune fled when the fans-culotte general had ceafed to command. At Ancenis they were again routed with great flaughter, and the paffage of the Loire was effected with a very confiderable lofs.

The republicans were thus delivered from an apprehenfion of feeing the royalifts at Paris, which, from the treafon or ignorance of the generals, they had at one moment fully expected. While Wefterman was purfuing the advantages he had gained on the north fide of the Loire, the army in the weft defeated the royalifts at Sallais, near Chollet; where the heroic Barra, a youth of thirteen years

of

of age, was killed. The island of Noirmoutier, the key of the insurgent departments on the side of the sea, which had served not only as a depôt, but also as the place of retreat for those who, though attached to the cause of royalty, did not like to share its dangers, was attacked; and after a severe conflict, in which the conventional troops had to contend with the waves as well as the fire of the enemy, the town was taken, and great quantities of stores fell into their hands.

After the capture of the island, the generals and representatives, Bourbotte and Turreau, ordered it to be surrounded; and a strict examination brought forth a great number of priests and other royalists, men and women, chiefly of high rank—the essence, as they were called, of the catholic army, who had hid themselves in the woods and the rocks from the fury of the conventional soldiers. These

unhappy fugitives were dragged to the tree of liberty, with general Delbec at their head, where in preſence of the army they were coolly murdered.

LET-

LETTER II.

THE inhabitants of Nantes had not long to meditate on the horrors which were approaching, for Carrier returns.

The convention had already decreed, that every city which either gave protection to the rebels, or did not repel them with all the means in its power, should be razed to the ground, and the property of its inhabitants be confiscated to the profit of the republic. To exterminate "the royalists of the Vendée" it was necessary to conquer them; but here the peaceable inhabitants of cities were to be destroyed, and the evidence of the crime was only to be found in the conscience of the executioner. Nantes, seated on the Loire, which empties itself into the sea some leagues beyond it, was one of

the moſt conſiderable and moſt commercial cities in France. Its inhabitants were rich, and, what is not always the concomitant of riches, were diſtinguiſhed for their diſintereſtneſs and patriotiſm. They had beheld with the ſame horror as every other friend to liberty the ſucceſs of the conſpirators of the 31ſt of May, and the tyrants had marked their perſons for vengeance, and their immenſe property for pillage.

A revolutionary committee was firſt appointed to examine into this "ariſtocracy of commerce and wealth;" and this committee, as might have been expected, was compoſed of thoſe whoſe characters ſtood higheſt, in the eſtimation of the repreſentatives, for cruelty or wickedneſs. To give this committee its proper energy, a company of revolutionary ſoldiers was formed, who were to be the ſbirri of the committee, and whoſe occupation was ſufficiently marked by the name they aſſumed,

ſumed, which was that of the company of Marat. Thus armed with the decrees of the convention, and having troops of murderers of various denominations at his command, in revolutionary committees, popular ſocieties, adminiſtrative bodies, and Maratiſt ſoldiers, Carrier began his operations in Nantes on the prieſts who were condemned to baniſhment. Thoſe men were waiting to undergo the puniſhment to which the law condemned them, for obſtinate perſeverance in honeſt ignorance; a puniſhment which it is aſſerted the circumſtances of the times required. As the law was pronounced, it does not appear that the convention had authoriſed Carrier to change the ſentence. This, however, he undertook; the prieſts were put on board a lighter which had a ſous-pape, or falſe bottom, and then conducted into the middle of the Loire; where, except two who eſcaped by ſwimming, they were all

drowned.

drowned. Carrier wrote an account of this expedition to the convention, and, with a kind of ſelf-complacent exultation, claimed merit for the novelty and effect of the meaſure.—"Quel torrent revolutionnaire que la Loire *!" The convention applauded the idea, and ordered Carrier's diſpatches to be inſerted in their gazette, the bulletin.

The committee of public ſafety, though it might think the drowning of refractory prieſts a pleaſant thing, were not perhaps aware that Carrier would take advantage of their good humour. Unfortunately for the inhabitants of Nantes, Carrier miſconſtrued their approbation as an invitation to proceed in his career; and having, with his ſword drawn, at the tribune harangued the jacobins of Nantes on their duties, explaining and enforcing the inſtructions

* What a revolutionary torrent is the Loire!

he

he had himſelf received, in order to inflame them with the ſame revolutionary zeal, he began to extend his plan of operations. The revolutionary committee had determined that a great conſpiracy exiſted in Nantes, and that the rich, who were ariſtocrates *par privilege*, were the conſpirators. They ordered accordingly all perſons ſuſpected of having been concerned in this conſpiracy to be arreſted, and to be ſent to Paris to be tried; decreeing, that whoever reſiſted ſhould be ſhot, whoever fled ſhould be declared an emigrant, and ordering all thoſe whoſe names were publiſhed to ſurrender themſelves in three days; forbidding every one, wives, ſiſters, or daughters, under ſevere penalties, to ſolicit their releaſe. Three hundred and thirty-two perſons were arreſted on this pretence. About one hundred of them we ſaw brought to Paris in waggons, bound like felons, for the reſt had periſhed from the

excessive

excessive cruelties which they had undergone; and we were made to believe that these men, who were distinguished in Nantes for their probity and patriotism, were rebels of the Vendée whom the representative had sent up to treat the Parisians with a *spectacle*, knowing their present taste for bloody fights; and it was expected that they would have been shot in the plain of Sablons, under the direction of Collot; but this never took place.

In the mean while Carrier swelled the *revolutionary* torrent at Nantes with other noyades, of which it appears that there were twenty-three expeditions. These noyades, or drowning scenes, were at first shrouded in the darkness of night; but familiarity with crimes having worn off all shame, they were afterwards executed in open day. There was also some appearance of regard for the sufferings of these unhappy victims in the beginning; since

ſince they were left ignorant of the fate that awaited them till the moment of execution; believing that they were only going to be transferred to Belle-Iſle, an iſland at the mouth of the river. There was ſomething like mercy alſo in the conſtruction of the drowning-boats, ſince the drawing of a bar of iron ingulphed the victims in an inſtant; and Carrier, in his firſt diſpatches to the convention, had the modeſty as well as the ingenuity of his prototype Anicetus, who, hiſtory ſays, propoſed this mode to Nero, and furniſhed him with excuſes for drowning his mother *. But the

* The freedman Anicetus furniſhed an expedient. He propoſed to conſtruct a veſſel, which when at ſea ſhould ſuddenly open in the middle, by which means Agrippina would inſtantly periſh. That a number of accidents happened at ſea; and that if Agrippina loſt her life in a ſhipwreck, who would be ſo malicious as to call that a crime which was the fault of the winds and waves?—See Morceaux Choiſis de Tacite, par M. d'Alembert.

crimes

crimes of these monsters being at length naturalizedinto manners, they grew weary of common murders, and invented new modes of destruction. Other vessels were fitted up for the reception of prisoners, which had various conveniences, among others a *salle à manger* (a dining-room), where Carrier and his committee sometimes feasted. In these vessels the prisoners were confined till a noyade was to take place. At one time eight hundred persons of both sexes, and of different ages, from fifteen to fourscore, were precipitated into the river. Where the love of life discovered itself in these unfortunate victims by clinging to the barges, when in the struggle their hands became untied, the murderers amused themselves with cutting them with their sabres, or knocking them on the head with their poles. Some of those victims were destined to die a thousand deaths; innocent young women were unclothed

in the preſence of the monſters; and, to add a deeper horror to this infernal act of cruelty, were tied to young men, and both were cut down with ſabres, or thrown into the river; and this kind of murder was called a republican marriage.

Theſe noyades, where ſimple drowning was the only ſuffering, might be conſidered as happy deliverances compared with the ſufferings of thoſe that remained in priſon. The wretched priſoners were heaped on each other in ſuch numbers, that the air became abſolutely peſtilential, and the keepers were employed continually in removing the dead.

Delicate women, the wives and daughters of thoſe who were made priſoners in the royaliſt army, expoſed to the inclemency of the winter in the damp of a dungeon, crowded together upon their ſtraw in order to ſhelter themſelves from the cold; and many a heart-breaking family ſcene preſented itſelf to thoſe

whoſe

whofe humanity led them to take away the children of royalifts under thirteen years of age, which the law permitted. A mother with four daughters, of which one was under fourteen, formed one of thefe groups. A citizen of Nantes went into the dungeon to fee if there was any object on which he might exercife his charity. He took up this young girl, crawling for weaknefs at her mother's feet, with the intention of conveying her home; while her fifters, being a few years older, were doomed to perifh. But to perifh together now feemed their only confolation; they refufed to part; and fome degree of violence was ufed to force away the child, who foon after the murder of her family died of a broken heart.

But noyades were not the only mode of murder: the fufillades were introduced at Nantes as they had been practifed at Lyons. Men, women in a ftate of pregnancy, boys and girls were killed with the

the bayonet, or ſhot without diſcrimination, and without the formality of a ſentence; and the executions were ſo multiplied, that the national guard were employed for ſix weeks in burying the perſons whom they had maſſacred. Among the multitudes deſtined to die, ſome have as it were returned to life, and given us their hiſtory; a few eſcaped by ſwimming; others recovered after having been ſhot. A young married woman of rank, who was put into a fuſillade with her huſband, although ſhe received three balls in her body, was found alive the next morning by thoſe who came to throw the dead into the pits. She had ſufficient ſtrength to implore their mercy, and they had the humanity to refer her caſe to the commiſſary. The commiſſary at firſt ordered the ſentence to be again put into execution: but falling at his feet ſhe repreſented the injuſtice and cruelty of making her undergo a ſecond death,

and

and that the unſkilfulneſs or negligence of the executioners ought not to ſubject her again to puniſhment. The commiſſary was ſoftened, and conſented that her life ſhould be ſpared, provided ſhe wou ldb ecome a ſick nurſe in the hoſpitals, where the perſon who related the anecdote to me ſaw her employed.

Some ſlight forms were obſerved in the execution of the decrees of the convention in the beginning of theſe maſſacres, and the ferocity of Carrier was ſometimes checked by the repreſentations of the conſtituted authorities, and ſometimes arreſted by the oppoſition of the judges. Carrier had named two wretches to the office of head executioners, who had *general* orders for drowning whenever they had leiſure. The public accuſer, who, though a timid old man, had oppoſed a ſecond general noyade which theſe ruffians were about to make, was ſent for by Carrier, who ſaid to him,

"It is you then, you old wretch, who take upon you to oppofe my orders! Take notice, that if the prifons be not emptied in two hours, I will guillotine you and the whole commiffion." The poor old man was affrighted, fell fick inftantly, and died imprecating curfes on Carrier.

After this leffon to the judges, no one thought of refifting Carrier's revolutionary impulfe. The royalifts who were made prifoners, and thofe who laid down their arms, came into Nantes and met with the fame fate. Pregnant women, who were under the protection of a fpecial decree, were murdered, and more than fix hundred children, formally excepted by the law as being under the age of fifteen, were drowned, notwithftanding the obfervation hazarded by the prefident of the tribunal, who was anfwered by the monfter, "All, all without ex-

ception;

ception; there can be no difficulty in the case."

Even these are but slight offences compared to certain atrocities that are alleged against him; the tyrants of antiquity are "quite shorn of their beams;" Caligula, Nero, and all that antient history records of strange murders, is obscured in our remembrance by the cruelty of Carrier. Former tyrants and assassins when compared to him appear but *moderés*; and Caligula's famous exclamation respecting the people of Rome is lost in the affliction of Carrier, when he regretted to his colleague Laingelot, who passed through Nantes in his way to Brest, the limits by which he was confined in the execution of national justice, having only the Loire for the extent of his operations: "Oh, what a happy fellow will you be," he adds, "happier far than I am! You will have the *sea* for your

expeditions,

expeditions, and a fleet of *ships* at your command!"

This revolutionary, or rather counter-revolutionary, impulse was not confined to Nantes. The country around was subjected to the same horrors. Whole communes were extirpated; and the peaceable inhabitants of different places, whom the murderers had assembled together, and who had never taken arms or given encouragement to the rebels, were massacred without distinction; women and children, magistrates dressed in their scarfs, going out to meet and welcome the conventional troops; thousands of citizens under arrest, insurgents who had surrendered themselves, peasants working in the fields, all fell alike the victims of this desolating fury.

The scent of blood was become so instinctive with those revolutionary missionaries in the Vendée, that though none of them could raise themselves to

Carrier's ſublimity of wickedneſs, there were many who, according to his own declaration*, practiſed very ſucceſsfully as *amateurs*.

Of the various calamities inflicted on this unhappy country, my imagination, melancholy as it is, could never furniſh me with images ſtrong enough to paint the horror, nor can any beneficial effect be produced on the mind by dwelling on evils ſo terrible; ſince I believe that the heart grows hard, that the feelings become deadened, by the long contemplation of ſo wide a waſte of ruin. As the wretch who is ſtretched under the hands of torturing executioners is ſaid, to feel pain but to a certain point, except

* "Vous voyez," dit Carrier, "que cette déclaration ne s'applique pas à moi, mais à tous les repréſentans du peuple dans la Vendée."

"You ſee," ſays Carrier, "that this declaration is applicable not to me, but to all the repreſentatives of the people in the Vendée."

when

when ſome life-ſtring, that has ſubmitted only to the general compreſſion, becomes more poignantly affected by ſome partial application; ſo we hear of *noyades*, *fuſillades*, *mitraillades*, and *guillotinades*, with the dullneſs of ſettled ſorrow, unleſs when rouſed to exertion at ſome tale of particular and atrocious horror.

But when the hiſtorian, whoſe faithful pencil muſt trace the hideous features of this Vendean war in all their deformity, ſhall deſcribe ſcenes which I dare not name, let no one, becauſe he may conſider ſuch crimes as ſcarcely within the verge of human poſſibility, doubt that they have been committed; ſince the events of the laſt five years, which have ſometimes led us into regions of hitherto undiſcovered beauty and ſublimity, have alſo dragged our reluctant ſteps into dens of undeſcribed and unknown monſters, whoſe exiſtence we had never till now believed.

LETTER III.

THE committee of public ſafety, having ſecured its permanence in the dictatorſhip through the complaiſance of the convention, which with loud and lively applauſes renewed its powers, for the ſake of form, at the end of each month as they expired, grew bolder in its projects, and, not ſatisfied with revolutionizing the republic after their own manner, aſſerted that their neighbours ought alſo to be made happy by taſting the *ſweets* of the ſame *ineſtimable* liberty. It had generally been underſtood, that the preſent war was the war only of the Engliſh miniſter; and that the people of England, though well wiſhers to the cauſe of freedom, were not ſufficiently powerful to counteract the deſigns of the adminiſtration.

As long as this opinion of the apathy of the English prevailed, we had lived in tolerable security; for it was difficult to persuade the French, notwithstanding the experience they had of the late war, that free people would twice waste its treasure and its strength, in so short a period, against nations struggling into freedom. The treason of Toulon, however, awakened the French from their dream of the *bonhommie* of the British nation towards them; and nothing was now talked of but the cowardly and ferocious English, and marching to Carthage.

In this language more was meant than was obvious to a common observer; for it was the business of the committee of government to work up the people to a strong degree of national hatred, in order to carry into effect a plan of invasion which they were meditating, although its impracticability had been demonstrated by those with whom they advised, and who

were more conversant on the subject than themselves; and at length they received the fullest and most satisfactory evidence that the English were not at all inclined to make the experiment to which they were invited. In the mean time the crimes of the English government were the standing order of the day at the jacobins; and had it not been for the spur given to malignity by these declamatory harangues, nothing could have been more amusing than their style.

One of the most distinguished of these performers in politics was the tragedian of Lyons. "We are now entering," says Collot, "into the conscience of Pitt, into that volcano which vomits forth every crime. We have traversed this mortiferous and pestilential lava; let us now march up to the crater, I mean the English government. If this government was not inherently bad, Pitt could not have found the means

of

of being ſo abominable. I would not put this government into competition with that of France. This would be comparing the exceſs of every vice, with the aſſemblage of every virtue; a government," adds this orator, juſt returned from Lyons reeking with the blood of thouſands of innocent victims, "ſuch as Heaven ought to have given to all nature; while the other is vicious, wanting all the virtues which we eſteem, and filled with every thing that is held in abhorrence amongſt us."

Although Robeſpierre had for certain reaſons thrown off his pack, the jacobins, in purſuit of the crimes of the Engliſh government, he did not permit any of them without chaſtiſement to follow too cloſe. One orator propoſed ſending inſtantly a hundred cannon to eſtabliſh liberty on the banks of the Thames; and, as a preparatory ſtep, to put to death all

the remains of the Briffotine faction, and all the *toads of the marsh* who were endeavouring to creep up the *mountain*. Such were the denominations of the seventy-three imprifoned deputies, and thofe of the republicans who ftill remained in the convention. As Robefpierre had not been confulted, there was an audacity in the propofition which provoked his warmeft indignation. He admitted that the propofition was extraordinarily popular, and revolutionary to the twentieth degree; but, as a punifhment for its rafhnefs, he condemned the fpeaker to an exclufion from the fociety; as well as another member who took up his defence, and talked of the defpotifm of opinion. Robefpierre immediately marked him on the fpot with the feal of reprobation, by declaring, as a proof of the culprit's criminality, that, when a juryman of the revolutionary tribunal, he had

given

given his verdict in favour of Miranda, who was known to be the great and firm support of the Briſſotine faction.

The jacobins were aſtoniſhed that ſo well-informed a nation as the Engliſh ſhould be reduced to ſo pitiable a condition as that of being ruled by monſters and volcanos; and this wonder grew till Robeſpierre, who had hitherto kept ſilence except when a member became ultra-revolutionary, told them they were all in the wrong. "It is to no purpoſe," ſays he, "to talk to the Engliſh about their government, or attempt to make them better; for you are all very much deceived if you think that either the morals or underſtanding of the Engliſh nation are at all to be compared with the French. They are two hundred years behind you, and hate you with a very conſtant and perfect hatred. If therefore you wiſh to inform them, you muſt accommodate yourſelves to

their incapacity, and adapt your language to their comprehenſion *."

Robeſpierre put an end to this jacobinical diſcuſſion, ſo kindly meant for the information of their unhappy neighbours, upon

* It appears that Voltaire was of a different opinion from Robeſpierre. "The Italians," ſays he, "till the time of Muratori, have never been thinkers; the French have thought only by halves; but the Engliſh, becauſe their wings have never been clipt, have flown to heaven and become the preceptors of the world, &c."

Had Voltaire lived at this period, and eſcaped the guillotine, he would perhaps have applied to Robeſpierre the obſervation he made on Marat, who had juſt then written a great book in order to demoliſh the Newtonian philoſophy, and make a revolution in all ſciences, particularly the ſcience of anatomy; "that he was more fitted to calumniate mankind, than to analyſe them."

It is not in the heat of revolutions that the true characters of their actors can be appreciated, and perhaps calumny never ſported with reputations more ſtrangely than during the political conflicts which have happened in France. *Robeſpierre* and *patriotiſm* have

upon feeing new dangers preffing round him which it was neceffary for him to make the order of the day. He had arrived

have been fynonymous terms; Marat loft his own name in that of *the friend of the people;* and the new term for robbery and pilfering was *briffot-er.* Of the extent of Robefpierre's patriotifm the evidence has been written in the blood of the innumerable victims of his tyranny. Marat is now confidered as a mifchievous madman; but his character has never been well analyfed, except in a fketch which Briffot has drawn of him in a work written during his laft captivity, which I have read in manufcript, and from which I fhall tranfcribe the portrait of Marat. See Appendix, No. II. I take this opportunity of mentioning that this pofthumous work of Briffot, which will foon be publifhed for the benefit of his amiable widow and her children, is written with the moft affecting fimplicity, candour, and truth. It is the hiftory of an honeft man, who was devoted to liberty from his earlieft years, and whofe life was one continued ftruggle in its caufe.

It appears from this work, that Briffot had been from his youth a republican in his political principles, and a fceptic in religion. He was one of

arrived to such a point of despotism in the society, that those who had any courage were disposed to revolt, and those who were cowards were in a constant

the subverters of the French monarchy; but with the same firmness with which he had rejected the millions offered to him by the court, he refused to participate in the crimes which stained the republic, and preferred being their victim. His sceptical errors in religion he shared in common with all men of letters in France; who universally consider infidelity as inseparably connected with philosophy, and whose ignorance in matters of religion is only equalled by their arrogance in rejecting what they have not examined. Brissot's Memoirs are replete with anecdotes of celebrated characters, both in France and England: they are written in the manner of Rousseau's Confessions: the writer develops himself to the world, and takes the same liberty with his acquaintance.

The French republic has already reinstated the memory of Brissot. Already his name is pronounced with reverence, as one of the founders of that republic, as the benefactor and the martyr of his country.

state

ſtate of terror. He had faſhioned the ſociety to his own purpoſes by an *epuration*, in which all thoſe who were not deemed to have opinions conformable to his own, or energy ſufficient to execute great deſigns, were excluded. But it was not without murmur that he was ſuffered to bear his faculties ſo imperiouſly: there were ſome who looked back to their high eſtate with ſhame, that ſo contemptible a tyrant ſhould have outrun their popularity.

Among the follies of the day were the reports of Barrere; who, as he was profeſſedly the lacquey of the tyrants, was appointed to be their trumpeter at the tribune. His reports were ſo extravagant, and ſo full of falſehood, that they at length became proverbial; and when we meant to expreſs our diſapprobation of any thing at once ſilly and atrocious, we were accuſtomed to obſerve that it was a

carmagnol* à la Barrere. "For a free people to have peace," ſays he, "the only way is to exterminate all deſpots. The French republic can only ſecure peace by dictating that peace to the world; then it will be laſting. Let us take a view of the forces in array againſt us—Look at them—there are the Engliſh—the Iriſh—the Scotch—the Hanoverians" (He might have added the Shetlanders, and the people of the Iſle of Man)—"Auſtrians, Bohemians, Hungarians, Flemiſh"—(He might have enumerated the people of the Black Foreſt, and the prince of Furſtenburg)—"Neapolitans, Piedmonteſe, Italians, and Papiſts, &c." In this mode of enumerating, Barrere might have counted enemies

"Thick as the leaves that ſtrew the brooks
"In Vall' Ombroſa:"

* The epithet which, in contemptuous pleaſantry, he himſelf beſtowed upon his reports.

and

and a plain man, who had no great ſkill in thoſe matters, would have fallen into the ſame error as the hoſt, who being called up on a dark night by a Spaniſh traveller, and informed that don John-Jerome-Franciſco-Pedro, with a multitude of other chriſtian names, ſurnames, and titles, was arrived, anſwered from his chamber-window, that they muſt go on to the town at a few miles diſtance, for that he had not room for a twentieth part of the company.

The commune of Paris, who had hitherto met with no oppoſition to the variety of reformation which they had propoſed, who had co-operated in the overthrow of government on the 31ſt of May, and who had ſince, of their own authority, annihilated the religion of the country, conceived that they might with equal facility take the regulation of both church and ſtate into their own hands, and diſburthen the convention of the

weight.

weight. They thought that those who had contributed to gain the victory ought to share in the spoils; they beheld with uneasiness the growing influence of their accomplices in the convention, and resolved not to suffer the continuance of this usurpation without remonstrance. The ambitious members of the commune were not supported upon this occasion by their allies the jacobins; for Peyreira, Proly, and Desieux, who had hitherto influenced that club, had now objects in view more gratifying to their feelings than disputes about the division of supreme power, since they had gained a sufficient portion to enable them to conduct the operations of that share of the government which they had taken under their more immediate protection, which was the regulation of the finances.

Robespierre, whose aim was permanent authority, did not suffer the depredations of his jacobin agents to pass unnoticed.

He

He found that the ſtability of his government would be endangered if ſuch encroachments on his adminiſtration were ſuffered to continue; and accordingly took a revolutionary meaſure, and put them into priſon as dilapidators of the public fortune. Among theſe dilapidators were the moſt active perſecutors of the fallen party of the Gironde. The chiefs of the municipality, who had hitherto been the agents of Robeſpierre, were alarmed at the impriſonment of their co-adjutors, the chiefs of the jacobins; and did not well brook returning to their primitive inſignificancy, and leaving their accomplices in tranquil poſſeſſion of the power they had helped them to uſurp. The firſt ſymptom of rebellion was the denunciation which Hebert made againſt Barrere at the jacobins'. It was not ſufficient to lull the nation into deſpotiſm by promiſing it the freeſt of all poſſible conſtitutions; the

the conqueſt of all the kingdoms of the world, and kings brought in fetters to Paris, were alſo promiſed with as much facility to the good people of the republic, as the knight of La Mancha diſpoſed of governments and iſlands to his truſty ſquire. Among other ſplendid aſſurances, Barrere had proclaimed from the tribune, that the war in the Vendée ſhould be finiſhed on the 1ſt of November. To ſave his credit, the prophet appeared at the tribune at the appointed time; and becauſe the royaliſts were marching victoriouſly from the Vendée acroſs the country, to the northern coaſts, he confidently aſſured the convention that the Vendée exiſted no longer. Hebert's aſſertion was well founded, that at the moment when Barrere pronounced their deſtruction they were in greater force than ever; but as to doubt the reports, the infallibility, or the reaſoning of the committee of public ſafety was an act of treaſon againſt

the

the republic, this crime of Hebert was not forgotten. The commune of Paris perceived that the committee of public safety had obtained an absolute power over the convention, and took measures to provide against it, by advertising a system directly opposite to that of the committee, which they judged would be more acceptable to the people, and establish their own popularity. They, who had been the contrivers of every insurrection; who had prompted to every murder, and had demanded at the bar of the convention that *terror* should continue to be the order of the day; that all priests whatever should be dismissed from all functions civil and *military*; that the prisoners of the Temple, the children of the late king, should be sent to the common prisons on the ground of equality, and that all persons who had gone to their country houses should be ordered, on pain of being suspected,

pected, to come into town, in order probably to be maſſacred more conveniently; became at once mild and tender-hearted. "There exiſts," ſays Chaumette *, the procureur of the commune, "a conſpiracy to divide patriots. *We* and the mountain-members of the convention have been from the beginning of the revolution the firmeſt ſupports of liberty, and it is alſo againſt us that calumny directs its principal efforts. The revolutionary committees, led aſtray by perfidious men, are often the inſtruments of theſe abominable machinations. We muſt aſſemble the members in a general council; we muſt tell them that it is time for deſpotiſm to ceaſe; for the father no longer to demand in vain the liberty of his ſon

* Chaumette was at the beginning of the revolution a ſhop-boy, and afterwards a hackney-writer. Hebert was a candle-ſnuffer at one of the theatres; and afterwards a receiver of the entrance money; from which place he was driven for his diſhoneſty.

unjuſtly

unjuſtly torn from him; the huſband that of his wife, and the brother that of his brother. Let us teach tyrants that man is the citizen of his country, and not the ſlave of deſpotiſm." The procureur in conſequence demanded that ten members of each revolutionary committee ſhould be called to the general council, to labour conjointly with the committee of public ſafety, and that two members only ſhould remain in each committee to watch over the execution of the meaſures to be taken. The ſenſibility of the committee of public ſafety was leſs awakened than that of the commune by Chaumette's pathetic eloquence. One of the members talked of Brutus and his ſons, and another remarked on the danger of rival powers, and invited the convention to annul the decree of the commune. The convention, finding one tyranny ſufficiently burdenſome, immediately obeyed; and the commune, like the

the reſt of the republic, ſubmitted to the yoke.

The commune was not the only rival with which Robeſpierre had to contend; for though a feeling of common danger had produced between men who were diſcordant in every thing but wickedneſs, an alliance—when that danger was paſt, there was no tie remaining by which they might continue to be united. It is the puniſhment of tyrants and villains to live in continual terror of each other; and this was the fate of thoſe who had conſpired to overturn the republic, and who had deſtroyed thoſe virtuous friends of liberty by whom it was founded. Robeſpierre feared, that the ſame means which he, with the aid of the commune of Paris, had employed againſt the Gironde, might be again put in practice to overthrow himſelf; and as he ſaw that the commune aſpired to independence, and had already given ſigns of an ambitious ſpirit,

ſpirit, he dreaded leſt ſome rival might ſtart up, who, with more generoſity and larger promiſes, might puſh him from his ſeat. This rival he ſaw in the perſon of Danton, who, with greater talents than Robeſpierre, and with a mind ſomewhat leſs atrocious, had from natural indolence neglected to cultivate that ſort of popularity which would ſoon have raiſed him to be the chief of this cabal. Of this party were Camille Deſmoulins, the author of the libel againſt the Gironde, which was publiſhed at the time as an addreſs from Paris to the departments; Fabre d'Eglantine, who was an intriguer, with more addreſs and leſs honeſty than Camille; La Croix, who was a wretch covered with crimes—venal, baſe, and treacherous; a compound of the moſt ſhocking vices; who had been ſucceſſively paid by the court and the foreign powers, and whoſe ſervices were at the diſpoſal of thoſe who could beſt

reward

reward them. There were others of leſs note, ſuch as Philippeaux, who had been a mountaineer of the lower region, and who, though ſharing in the iniquity of his party, had been leſs active than the reſt in the commiſſion of crimes. He had incurred the ſuſpicion of honeſty from the account he publiſhed of the iniquity of the war in the weſtern departments; but he ſtrongly contended for his ſhare in the general villany, as the friend of Marat, and the murderer of the Gironde. Theſe men had only hinted diſapprobation at the exceſs of the tyranny which was then exerciſed. But Robeſpierre collected the whiſpers of the party before any plan was actually arranged, and declared loudly, though myſteriouſly, both in the convention and the jacobins', that the republic was in danger from the combinations of ſeditious and perverſe men; whom he repreſented as new men, patriots of yeſterday,

day, who were eager to lay hold of the pillars of the revolution, and, by climbing to the height of the mountain, precipitate thoſe who had hitherto ſat there with ſo much ſucceſs. The height of the mountain, was another figure for the ſummit of his kingdom, where many of thoſe whom he was about to accuſe had long aſpired to the loftieſt ſeats, which it was impoſſible all could obtain;

> "Devil with devil damned
> "Firm concord holds;" MILTON.

but here, as the ſupremacy was to be undivided, no two parties could exiſt on equal terms at the ſame time. The party of Danton had loſt much of its influence with the people by the indolence of the chief, and the rapacity of the ſubalterns; while Robeſpierre had neglected no means to obtain that dominion on which he had perſeveringly bent his

mind. Under Robeſpierre's banners the great majority of the committee had enliſted; but his ſworn and ſacred allies were St. Juſt and Couthon, whoſe ſouls were of adamantine temper. Barrere had not yet taken all his degrees in atrocity, being only their lacquey, and having nothing very original in wickedneſs, except the phraſeology he made uſe of in its juſtification.

Robeſpierre now thought that it was neceſſary to his ſafety to be diſencumbered of the faction of the commune, and the faction of Danton. It was not difficult to bring a thouſand charges againſt them, of which one alone before the great tribunal of national juſtice would have been ſufficient to have directed the ſword of national vengeance; but as the accuſers could proffer none of thoſe charges without criminating themſelves, they had recourſe to the expedient of their being accomplices of the faction

de l'etranger*, which was a moſt inexhauſtible ſource for the fabrication of all indictments and bills for conſpiracies. When the committee of public ſafety had marked their victims, it was neceſſary to inform the convention, that they were going to prepare the ſacrifice; not that they feared any oppoſition or remonſtrance, but for the ſake of regularity. The convention, therefore, was inſtructed by St. Juſt, that a conſpiracy was framed by foreigners, who were about to commit a number of horrible things, ſtarve, plunder, and murder the good people of the republic; that this faction had already overthrown religion and morality, and was about to form a new ſect of immorality, and the love of ſenſual enjoyments, from which innocence and virtue had every thing to dread; that the great directors of theſe machi-

* The faction of foreigners.

nations of the English court, were foreigners then at Paris, who had corrupted the agents of government; and that it was necessary they should all be punished together.

The convention was seized with horror at hearing those things, and with the same unanimity with which they had applauded Carrier's revolutionary wit, decreed, as their committee ordered, that whoever, by any act whatever, should attempt to degrade, destroy, or put obstacles in the way of the national convention, should be punished with death.

The faction of Hebert, Chaumette, and Danton, were led successively to the guillotine, as I have before related.

In order to facilitate the clearing of the prisons, and to put in force a law just before passed, that the property of all persons who should be deemed enemies of the revolution should be confiscated to the profit of the republic, and that the

criminals

criminals ſhould be confined in priſon till the peace, when they were to be baniſhed for ever; the convention decreed, that ſix popular commiſſions ſhould be formed to try thoſe perſons ſpeedily, and ſhorten the labour of the revolutionary tribunal. Other decrees of the ſame colour paſſed at this period, ſuch as making the perſon who ſhould conceal a conſpirator liable to the ſame puniſhment. All theſe decrees the convention paſſed, on the ſimple propoſition of the committee, to whoſe fatherly protection the ſtate was in full confidence conſigned.

Had the vengeance or jealouſy of the tyrants been directed only againſt their own accomplices; had only their aſſociates in wickedneſs, their Heberts and their Dantons fallen, though the accuſations on which their condemnation was founded were abſurd and groundleſs, there was no one who would not have rejoiced at thoſe ſteps towards na-

 tional

tional deliverance. But these acts of justice were very rare, while those of murder were increasing every day. Among the mass of victims which at this period were sacrificed were the farmers-general of France. These men had never been favourites with the people at any period; their profession was in itself unpopular, though I have never heard that any of the persons who suffered had been guilty of any acts of oppression not allowed by the law. These men were accused of various crimes, but none wore a more heinous appearance than a plot which, it was asserted, they had formed against the health of the citizens in preparing and vending bad snuff. There was little hope that, when the guillotine was the minister of finance, farmers-general could escape: all were guilty of possessing riches; all therefore perished.

The municipality of Sedan was led to death *en mass*, at the same period. They

were

were accufed of being partizans of La Fayette at the epocha of the 10th of Auguft. Ignorant of the events which had been paffing in Paris, and under military conftraint, they had for a few days fupported La Fayette's pretenfions; but they foon difcovered their error, and accepted the amnefty that was offered them. No new caufe of impeachment could be brought againft them except their great wealth, on account of which they were fent to the tribunal at Paris; where forty of them were condemned to die. Sedan was famous for its manufactories, and thefe men were the proprietors of the chief eftablifhments. Their wealth, while it circulated throughout Europe, furnifhed food to thoufands who were now reduced to want, and their own hitherto opulent families were devoted to beggary and ruin.

The tyranny of thefe monfters was not the only evil with which the people of

France, had to ſtruggle. Famine was preſſing on with haſty ſtrides. The law of the maximum had not only driven away the foreign merchant, but alſo kept at a diſtance the dealer, who was accuſtomed to provide for the daily returning wants of the inhabitants. The grazier no longer drove his oxen to Paris, where the maximum, on entering the barriers, diminiſhed half their value; nor could the butcher furniſh meat, when the maximum allowed him but half the purchaſe money of the cattle. Des caremes civiques *, and other revolutionary meaſures of the like ſort, were recommended to the faſting multitude; but one wag, more indignant than the reſt, painted well the ſtate of want and cruelty to which Paris was then abandoned, by writing on the pedeſtal of the ſtatue which was placed on the ſpot of the pub-

* Patriotic Lents.

lic executions: * Il n'y a de boucherie à Paris, que ſur cette place.

This melancholy period was the full completion of that prophetic moment when Vergniaud poured out his eloquent ſoul againſt thoſe murderers, in his famous ſpeech on the trial of Lewis XVI. "And ye, induſtrious citizens, who have made the revolution; ye, whoſe ſacrifices are multiplied every day in proportion to the wants of your country; what will become of you? What will be your reſources? What hands will wipe away your tears? Who will give comfort to your families? Will you go and ſeek for your pretended friends? Ah, rather fly from them! I will tell you what they will anſwer, when you ſhall aſk them for bread. They will ſay, "Go to the charnel-houſes, and tear from the earth the palpitating limbs of the corpſes which

* The only butchery in Paris is at this place.

we have there heaped together." Blood and corpſes—theſe are all they will have to offer you! "You ſhudder, my fellow citizens; O! my country, I call thee to witneſs the efforts which I make to ſnatch thee from the horrible criſis into which theſe men would plunge thee!" But his prophetic ſpirit failed, when he aſſured his auditors that thoſe days of mourning would never arrive. "Thoſe aſſaſſins are too cowardly," ſays he; "thoſe little Mariuses, grovelling in the mud of the marſh, where fled that conſpirator, who had at leaſt ſome virtues." Vergniaud was miſtaken: the modern chiefs had indeed leſs courage than Marius, but the citizens of Paris were more cowardly than the citizens of Rome.

LET-

LETTER IV.

THE cities of Paris and Lyons, and the extenſive department of the Vendée, were not the only ſcenes of horror which France exhibited during the tyranny of Robeſpierre; alas, there was ſcarcely a valley of that deſolated country, " whoſe flowerets were not bruiſed with the tread of hoſtile paces!" Robeſpierre could not have ſo long maintained his iron ſceptre, had he not found, to uſe the words of Shakeſpeare,

> " Slaves that took his humours for a warrant,
> " To break into the bloody houſe of life,
> " And, on the winking of authority,
> " To underſtand a law."———

while Carrier ravaged the country of the weſt, and Collot d'Herbois laid the

 opulent

opulent city of the eaſt in aſhes, Le Bon hung like a deſtroying vulture over the north, feaſting his ſavage ſoul with the ſight of mangled carcaſes; and Maignet conſumed the lovely villages of the ſouth in the flames of a general conflagration. The ſcene of Maignet's proconſulate was the departments of Vaucluſe, and the mouth of the Rhone —thoſe celebrated regions for ever dear to the lovers of the elegant arts, where, cheering the gloom of gothic barbariſm, to uſe the language of Oſſian, "the light of the ſong aroſe;" where the Troubadours ſtrung their early harps, and where the immortal Petrarch pour-ed forth his impaſſioned ſtrains. Divine poet! no more ſhall the unhappy lover ſeek for conſolation in ſhedding delicious tears on the brink of that fountain where thou haſt wept for Laura!—no more ſhall he haunt with

pensive enthusiasm that solitary valley, those craggy rocks, those hanging woods, and torrent-streams, where thou hast wandered with congenial feelings, and to which thy tender complaints have given everlasting renown!—those enchanting dreams, those dear illusions have for ever vanished—that delicious country, the pride of France, the garden of Europe, the classical haunt of Petrarch no longer presents the delightful images of beauty, of poetry, of passion; the magical spell is broken, the soothing charm is dissolved; the fairy scenes have been polluted, the wizard bowers profaned; the orange-groves are despoiled of their aromatic sweetness; the waters are tinged with blood; the hollow moans of calamity issue from the caverns, and the shrieks of despair re-echo from the cliffs; the guillotine has arisen amidst those consecrated shades where love alone had reared its altars!—

no longer with the name of Vauclufe is affociated the idea of Petrarch; that of Maignet, the deftroying Maignet, prefents itfelf to the fhuddering imagination, and the aftonifhed foul ftarts back with horror——

"I fee, where late the verdant landfcape fmil'd,
A joylefs defart, and a dreary wild;
O'er all the air a direful gloom is fpread;
Pale are the meads, and all their bloffoms dead;
The clouds of April fhed a baleful dew,
And nature wears a veil of deadly hue."——

One of the firft acts of Maignet, upon his arrival in the department of Vauclufe, was the deftruction of the village of Bedouin, fituated in a country of the moft romantic beauty, and where the benign climate fofters all the rich productions of fummer, and forms a ftriking contraft to the eternal fnows which cover the mountain of Ventoux, at the foot of which the village is placed.

A fmall tree of liberty which had been

been planted on a ſolitary ſpot near Bedouin, was, during the night, torn from the ground by ſome wretches who knew that this incident would furniſh a pretext for pillage and devaſtation. At break of day the very perſons who were the perpetrators of this act, one of whom was the preſident of the popular ſociety, ſounded a general alarm, and accuſed the guiltleſs inhabitants of Bedouin of the ſacrilege committed againſt the hallowed ſymbol of freedom.

Revolutionary troops were inſtantly ſummoned to carry fire and ſword through the village and territory of Bedouin. A municipal commiſſion was immediately organized by Maignet, which preſented itſelf wherever there was the hope of ſpoil, ſpreading every where deſolation and death. Five hundred habitations were delivered to the flames; the fruits of the harveſt were conſumed, and the mandate of Maignet, fatal as the fabled

fabled wand of an evil magician, ſtruck the rich and luxuriant ſoil with ſudden ſterility. The flouriſhing manufactures of Bedouin ſhared the fate of its deſolated fields; and all that was ſaved from the general wreck were the treaſures ſpread by the fruitful ſilk worm upon the tops of the trees by which it is nouriſhed. A tribunal of blood was formed by the order of Maignet; every day the deſtined number of victims were marked by the public accuſer; and the inhabitants, who were unable to name the guilty perſons, were all involved in one proſcription. Thoſe who eſcaped the knife of the guillotine ſought for ſhelter in the depths of caverns, after the conflagration of their habitations, on the ruins of which placards were fixed, forbidding any perſon to approach the ſpot. The hollow cliffs re-echoed the moans of the widow and the orphan. Two hundred and eighty young men of

Bedouin

Bedouin who had flown to the frontier even before the requiſition in order to defend their country, in vain diſpatch ſucceſſive letters, enquiring with fond ſolicitude after their parents. Thoſe gallant young ſoldiers, will return to their native village, their brows bound with the laurels of valour. Alas! they will find their native village but one ſad heap of ruins!—in vain they will call upon the tender names of father, of mother, of ſiſter:—a melancholy voice will ſeem to iſſue from the earth that covers them, and ſigh, *they are no more!* For thoſe victorious warriors no car of triumph is prepared; no mother's tears of tranſport ſhall hail the bleſſed moment of their return; no father ſhall claſp them to his boſom with exulting joy, proud of their heroic deeds. Ah, no! their toils, their dangers, and their generous ſacrifices ſhall find no recompenſe in the ſweetneſs of domeſtic af-

fection,

fection, in the soothing bliss which, after absence, belongs to home!—alas! their homes are levelled with the ground; they will find no spot upon which to repose their wearied limbs but the graves of their murdered parents.—

The village of Bedouin was too confined a sphere for the destroying genius of Maignet. His thirst of blood was not yet allayed, his taste for desolation was not yet gratified. A wider scene of ruin fired his imagination, and his creative genius furnished the committee of public safety with a model for the law of the 22d of Prairial, which banished all judicial forms from the revolutionary tribunal of Paris. Maignet, after the destruction of Bedouin, caused what he termed a popular commission to be erected at Orange, for the purpose of trying all the counter-revolutionists of the departments of Vaucluse, and the mouth of the Rhone, without any written evidence,

dence, and without a jury. "Twelve or fifteen thousand persons are imprisoned in those departments," says Maignet, in a letter to Couthon; "if I were to execute the decree which orders all conspirators to be brought to Paris, it would require an army to conduct them, and they must be billeted like soldiers upon the road." Maignet therefore obtained the sanction of the committee of public safety, which was given without the consent of the convention, to his plan of forming a popular commission at Orange.

The committee of public safety named the judges, who by their conduct justified the discernment with which they were chosen, and proceeded with revolutionary rapidity in their work of death. "You know," says the secretary of the commission, in a letter to Payan, "the situation of Orange; the guillotine is placed in the front of the *mountain*, and it seems as if the heads in falling paid it

the

the homage it deserves." Sometimes however the majority of the judges of Orange complain in their letters of two of their colleagues, whose consciences had not altogether attained the height of the revolution. Faurety, the president of the commission, says in a letter to Payan, "Ragot, Feruex and myself are *au pas*,* Roman Fouvosa is a good creature, but an adherer to forms, and a little off the revolutionary point which he ought to touch.—Meillerit, my fourth colleague, is good for nothing, absolutely good for nothing in the place he occupies; he is sometimes disposed to save counter-revolutionary priests; he must have *proofs*, as at the ordinary tribunals of the antient system."—Those troublesome scruples of

* The military expression of marching *au pas*, to the beat of the drum, became a sort of cant term much in use during the tyranny of Robespierre; and adherence to the principles and doctrines of the day was signified by saying je suis *au pas*.

two

two of the judges were however ſo completely over-ruled by the majority of their colleagues, that the departments of Vaucluſe and the mouth of the Rhone became the ſcenes of the moſt horrible outrages againſt humanity. Multitudes had already periſhed by the murderous commiſſion of Orange, and multitudes in the gloom of priſons awaited the ſame fate, when the fall of Robeſpierre ſtopped the torrent of human blood.

Amidſt the maſs of far-ſpread evil, amidſt the groans of general calamity, no doubt many a ſigh of private ſorrow has never reached the ear of ſympathy, and many a victim has fallen unpitied and unknown. Some of the martyrs of Maignet's tyranny have, however, found a "ſad hiſtorian of the penſive plain;" and the fate of Monſieur de M——'s family, which I have heard related much in detail by an old female ſervant who was the companion of their misfortunes, is

is not the leaſt affecting of thoſe tales of ſorrow.

M. de M——, formerly a noble, lived with his ſon an only child at Marſeilles, where he was generally reſpected, and where during the progreſs of the revolution he had acted the part of a firm and enlightened patriot. After the fatal events of the 31ſt of May, he became ſuſpected of what was called federaliſm by the jacobin party, which uſurped the power in that city, and puniſhed with impriſonment or death all thoſe who had honourably proteſted againſt the tyranny of the mountain faction. M. M—— was warned of the danger by a friend time enough to fly from the city, accompanied only by an old female ſervant who entreated to ſhare the fortune of her maſter. His wife died ſome years before the revolution, and his ſon, an amiable an accompliſhed young man of twenty-four years of age, had a few weeks

before

before his father's flight been called upon by the firſt requiſition, and had joined the army of the Pyrenees.

M. de M——, after wandering as far as his infirmities would permit, for although only in his ſixty-third year his frame was much debilitated by a long courſe of ill health, took refuge in a ſolitary habitation at a few leagues diſtance from Ariquon, and in one of the wildeſt parts of that romantic country. The mountains ſeem to cloſe the ſcene upon the traveller, till by a narrow cleft it again opens into a ſmall valley, where this little hermitage, for ſuch was the aſpect of the dwelling, was placed. This unfrequented valley was rich with paſturage, and bounded by lofty hills, wooded cliffs, and in ſome parts by large groteſque rocks with ſharp peaks, that roſe above the foliage of the hanging foreſts. Not far from this ruſtic habitation a clear torrent rolls with no ſcanty ſtream down

a bold rock, into which its fall had worn grots and caverns, which were luxuriously decorated with ſhrubs for ever watered by the ſpray. The torrent not falling from a very conſiderable height, produced ſounds more ſoothing than noiſy, and without having the power of exciting the ſenſation of ſublimity, awakened that of penſive pleaſing melancholy. This ſequeſtered valley, rich in the wild graces of nature, had eſcaped the decorations of French art, and no jets d'eaux, clipped trees, and "alleys who have brothers," deformed its ſolitary receſſes. Far above, and at ſome diſtance, aroſe the lofty mountain of Ventoux, covered with its eternal ſnows; that mountain which Petrarch climbed in ſpite of the ſteep rocks that guard its aſcent, and from the ſummit of which he gazed upon the Alps, the boundary of his native country, and ſighed; or caſt his looks upon the waves of the Mediterranean

which

which bathe Marſeilles, and daſh them-ſelves againſt Aignes-Mortes; while he ſaw the rapid Rhone flowing majeſtically along the valley, and the clouds rolling beneath his feet.

Such was the ſcene where M. de M— ſought for refuge, and where he ſheltered himſelf from the rage of his ferocious perſecutors. He had ſoon after the anguiſh of hearing that his brother, who had a place in the adminiſtration of one of the ſouthern departments, and who had taken an active part on the ſide of the Gironde, had periſhed on the ſcaffold. M. de M—— found means to inform his ſiſter-in-law of the place of his retreat, to which he conjured her to haſten with her daughter, and ſhare the little property which he had reſcued from the general wreck of his fortune. His old ſervant Marianne, who was the bearer of this meſſage, returned, accompanied by his niece: her mother was no more: ſhe

had survived only a few weeks the death of her husband. The interview between mademoiselle Adelaide de M—— and her uncle produced those emotions of overwhelming sorrow that arise at the sight of objects which interest our affections after we have sustained any deep calamity; in those moments the past rushes on the mind with uncontrollable vehemence; and mademoiselle de M—, after having long embraced her uncle with an agony that choked all utterance, at length pronounced, in the accents of despair, the names of father and of mother.

M. de M—— endeavoured to supply to his unfortunate niece the place of the parents she had lost, and forgot his own evils in this attempt to sooth the affliction of this interesting mourner, who at nineteen years of age, in all the bloom of beauty, was the prey of deep and settled melancholy. She had too much sensi-

bility not to feel his tender cares, and often reſtrained her tears in his preſence becauſe they gave him pain. When thoſe tears would no longer be ſuppreſſed, ſhe wandered out alone, and, ſeating herſelf on ſome fragment of rock, ſoothed by the murmurs of the hollow winds and moaning waters, indulged her grief without control. In one of thoſe lonely rambles, ſacred to her ſorrows, ſhe was awakened from melancholy muſing by the ſudden appearance of her couſin, the ſon of Mr. de M——, who, after having repeatedly expoſed his life during a long and perilous campaign in the ſervice of his country, returned—to find his home deſerted and his father an exile. Such were the rewards which the gallant defenders of liberty received from the hands of tyrants. The young man flew to his father's retreat, where the firſt object that met his eyes was his lovely couſin, whom he had a few

months before beheld in all the pride of youthful beauty; her cheek flushed with the gay suffusion of health, and her eye sparkling with pleasure. That cheek was now covered with fixed paleness, and that eye was dimmed with tears; but mademoiselle de M—— had never appeared to him so interesting as in this moment.

Two young persons placed together in such peculiar circumstances, must have had hearts insensible indeed, had they conceived no attachment for each other. The son of M. de M—— and Adelaide, who both possessed an uncommon share of sensibility, soon felt, that while all beyond the narrow cleft which separated the little valley from the rest of the world was misery and disorder, whatever could give value to existence was to be found within its savage boundary, in that reciprocal affection which soothed the evils of the past, and shed

a soft

a soft and cheering ray over the gloom of the future. The scene in which they were placed was peculiarly calculated to cherish the illusions of passion; not merely from displaying those simple and romantic beauties the contemplation of which softens while it elevates the affections —it had also that local charm which endears to minds of taste and sentiment spots which have been celebrated by the powers of genius. Petrarch, the tender, the immortal Petrarch, had trod those very valleys, had climbed those very rocks, had wandered in those very woods—and the two young persons, who both understood Italian, when they read together the melodious strains of that divine poet, found themselves transported into new regions, and forgot for a while that revolutionary government existed. From those dreams, those delightful illusions, they were awakened by a letter which a friend and fellow-soldier of young de M—— conveyed to him, in which

he conjured him to return immediately to the army, if he would ſhun being claſſed among the ſuſpected or the proſcribed.

Young de M—— conſidered the defence of his country as a ſacred duty which he was bound to fulfil. He inſtantly prepared to depart. He bid adieu to his father and Adelaide with tears wrung from a bleeding heart, and tore himſelf away with an effort which it required the exertion of all his fortitude to ſuſtain. After having paſſed the cleft which encloſed the valley, he again turned back to gaze once more on the ſpot which contained all his treaſure. Adelaide, after his departure, had no conſolation but in the ſad yet dear indulgence of tender recollections; in ſhedding tears over the paths they had trod, over the books they had read together. Alas, this unfortunate young lady had far other pangs to ſuffer than the tender repinings of abſence from a beloved object! Some weeks

after

after the departure of her lover, the departments of Vauclufe and the Mouth of the Rhone were defolated by Maignet. Two profcribed victims of his tyranny, who were the friends of M. de M——, and knew the place of his retreat, fought for an afylum in his dwelling. M. de M—— received his fugitive friends with affectionate kindnefs. But a few days after their arrival their retreat was difcovered by the emiffaries of Maignet; the narrow pafs of the valley was guarded by foldiers; the houfe was encompaffed by a military force; and M. de M—— was fummoned to depart with the confpirators whom he had dared to harbour, in order to appear with them before the popular commiffion eftablifhed at Orange. This laft ftroke his unhappy niece had no power to fuftain. All the wounds of her foul were fuddenly and rudely torn open; and altogether overwhelmed by this unexpected,

expected, this terrible calamity, which filled up the measure of her afflictions, her reason entirely forsook her. With frantic agony she knelt at the feet of him who commanded the troop; she implored, she wept, she shrieked; then started up and hung upon her uncle's neck, pressing him wildly in her arms. Some of the soldiers proposed conducting her also to the tribunal; but the leader of the band, whether touched by her distress, or fearful that her despair would be troublesome on the way, persuaded them to leave her behind. She was dragged from her uncle, and locked in a chamber, from whence her shrieks were heard by the unfortunate old man till he had passed the narrow cleft of the valley, which he was destined to behold no more. His sufferings were acute, but they were not of long duration. The day of his arrival at Orange, he was led before the popular commission, together

with

with his friends, and from thence immediately dragged to execution.

In the mean time mademoifelle de M——, releafed by Marianne from the apartment where fhe had been confined by the mercilefs guards, wandered from morning till evening amidft the wildeft receffes of the valley, and along the moft rugged paths fhe could find. She was conftantly followed in her ramblings by her faithful fervant, who never loft fight of her a fingle moment, and who retains in her memory many a mournful complaint of her difordered mind, many a wild expreffion of defpair. She often retired to a fmall nook near the torrent, where her uncle had placed a feat, and where he ufually paffed fome hours of the day. Sometimes fhe feated herfelf on the bench; then ftarted up, and, throwing herfelf on her knees before the fpot where her uncle ufed to fit,

bathed it with floods of tears. "Dear old man," ſhe would cry, "your aged head!—They might have left me a lock of his grey hairs. When the ſoldiers come for *me*, Marianne, you may cut off a lock of mine for Charles—Poor Charles!—It is well he's gone—I ſee the guillotine behind thoſe trees!—and now they drag up a weak old man!—they tie him to the plank!—it bends—oh heaven!"—

The acute affliction with which young de M—— heard of the murder of his father was ſtill aggravated by the tidings he received from Marianne of the ſituation of his beloved Adelaide. Her image was for ever preſent to his mind; and, unable to ſupport the bitterneſs of thoſe pangs which her idea excited, he again found means to obtain leave of abſence for a few weeks, and haſtened to the valley. He found the habitation deſerted—all was dark and

ſilent:

ſilent: he flew through the apartments, calling upon the name of Adelaide, but no voice anſwered his call.

He left the houſe, and walked with haſty ſteps along the valley. As he paſſed a cavern of the rocks, he heard the moans of Adelaide—he ruſhed into the cavern—ſhe was ſeated upon its flinty floor, and Marianne was ſitting near.—Adelaide caſt up her eyes as he entered, and looked at him earneſtly—he knelt by her ſide, and preſſed her hand to his boſom—“ I don't know you,” ſaid Adelaide.—“ Not know me!” he cried, “ not know Charles!”—“ If you *are* Charles,” ſhe reſumed ſullenly, “ you're come too late—'tis all over!—Poor old man!” ſhe cried, riſing haſtily from the ground, and claſping her hands together, “ don't you ſee his blood on my clothes? I begged very hard for him—I told them I had no father and mother but *him*—If you *are* Charles, begone, begone!—

 They're

They're coming—they're on the way—
I ſee them upon the rock!—That knife—
that bloody knife!"—

Such were the ravings of the diſordered imagination of this unfortunate young lady, and which were ſometimes interrupted by long intervals of ſilence, and ſometimes by an agony of tears. Her lover watched over her with the moſt tender and unwearied aſſiduity; but his cares were ineffectual. The life of Adelaide was near its cloſe. The convulſive pangs of her mind, the extraordinary fatigues ſhe had ſuffered in her wanderings, the want of any nouriſhment except bread and water, ſince ſhe obſtinately refuſed all other food, had reduced her frame to a ſtate of incurable weakneſs and decay.

A ſhort time before ſhe expired, ſhe recovered her reaſon, and employed her laſt remains of ſtrength in the attempt to conſole her wretched lover. She ſpoke

to him of a happier world, where they ſhould meet again, and where tyrants ſhould oppreſs no more—ſhe graſped his hand—ſhe fixed her eyes on his—and died.

With the gloomy ſilence of deſpair, with feelings that were denied the relief of tears, and were beyond the utterance of complaint, this unfortunate young man prepared with his own hands the grave of her he loved, and himſelf covered her corpſe with earth.

The laſt offices paid by religion to the dead, the hallowed taper, the lifted croſs, the ſolemn requiem, had long ſince vaniſhed, and the municipal officer returned the duſt to duſt with unceremonious ſpeed. The lover of Adelaide choſe to perform himſelf thoſe ſad functions for the object of his tenderneſs, and might have exclaimed with our poet,

" What though no weeping loves thy aſhes grace,
" Nor poliſh'd marble emulate thy face;

" What

" What though no facred earth allow thee room,
" Nor hallowed dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb!
" Yet fhall thy grave with rifing flow'rs be dreft,
" And the green turf lie lightly on thy breaft:
" There fhall the morn her earlieft tears beftow,
" There the firft rofes of the year fhall blow;
" While angels with their filver wings o'erfhade
" The ground now facred by thy reliques made."

Young de M—— paffed the night at the grave of Adelaide. Marianne followed him thither, and humbly entreated him to return to the houfe. He pointed to the new-laid earth, and waved his hand as if he wifhed her to depart, and leave his meditations uninterrupted.

The next morning at break of day he entered the houfe, and called for Marianne. He thanked her for her care of Adelaide; he affured her of his everlafting gratitude. While he was fpeaking, his emotion choked his voice, and a fhower of tears, the firft he had fhed fince the death of Adelaide, foothed his oppreffed heart. When he had recover-

ed

ed himſelf, he bade Marianne farewell, and haſtened out of the houſe, muttering in a low tone, "This muſt be avenged." He told Marianne, that he was going to rejoin his battalion; but all enquiries after him have ſince been fruitleſs: this unhappy young man has been heard of no more!

LETTER V.

AT the fearful climax of revolutionary government which we have now reached, we find no ſoothing objects which can repoſe the weary eye, or cheer the ſinking heart. An hiſtorical ſketch of this period is no common picture of human nature, tinctured with the blended hues of vice and virtue: it is like the ſavage ſcenery of Salvator, where all is wildly horrible, and every figure on the canvaſs is a murderer. We are forced to wander through ſucceſſive evils; to turn our eyes from the popular commiſſion of Orange to the revolutionary tribunal of Arras, from the crimes of Maignet to the atrocities of Lebon.

This revolutionary chief took his place in the national convention as the ſecond

ſuppléant

suppléant of the department of Calais, a few weeks after the memorable 31st of May. It appears that the committee of public safety had penetration enough to discern his extraordinary capacity for evil, since he had appeared a very short time at the convention, when he was sent upon mission, with full plenitude of revolutionary powers, into the department of the Pas du Calais, of which he was a representative.

Lebon seems to have determined to distinguish himself, and merit the applause of his employers, by exercising new modes of oppression, and trying new experiments of cruelty. One of his preliminary strokes of tyranny was that of dragging in succession the multitude he had arrested, from their respective prisons, and obliging them to appear before the popular society, placed on an elevated seat, where the men were exposed to all the indignities his agents could

could inflict, and the women to the coarsest ribaldry and the most barbarous insults. These examinations were the usual prelude to an accusation before the revolutionary tribunal which he established at Arras, and a section of which he sent, for the sake of expedition in his work of death, to Cambray. The judges and jury of those tribunals were composed of his own relations and his creatures; and, together with the executioner, they lived in his house, and dined at his table.

In the mean time he caused the following inscription to be written over the door of his apartment: "Ceux qui entreront ici pour solliciter l'élargissement des prisonniers, n'en sortiront que pour être mis en arrestation *." Thus did this unrelenting tyrant seek to repress the generous

* Those who enter here to solicit the release of prisoners, shall only go out to be themselves put in confinement.

nerous efforts of friendſhip, and congeal the tears of ſympathy by the ſenſe of perſonal danger.

The large and populous city of Arras ſoon wore the aſpect of an unpeopled deſert. No cheerful ſounds were heard in the ſtreets: all was ſolitary and ſilent. The town appeared widowed of its inhabitants; the few who remained at liberty having found themſelves, when they ventured to go out, expoſed "to meet the rudeneſs and ſwilled inſolence" of Lebon and his inebriated jury, who paraded the ſtreets armed with ſabres and piſtols, inſulting, and often arreſting, perſons with whoſe countenance or figure they happened to be diſpleaſed.

The mountain-leaders had all a congenial thirſt for blood; but while others contented themſelves with iſſuing mandates for its being ſhed, Lebon was unſatisfied unleſs he beheld it flow. At the hour of execution he uſed to appear

at a balcony of the theatre, near which the ſcaffold was placed, and ſip his coffee while the heads of his victims were falling. Sometimes he ordered the military bands to play revolutionary airs during the executions. Sometimes he apoſtrophized the perſons who were about to die; and the laſt ſounds which met their ear were the outrages againſt humanity which iſſued from his polluted lips.

The former marquis de Vieux-fort was tied to the fatal plank, with the knife ſuſpended over his head, when Lebon appeared upon the balcony of the theatre, commanded the executioner to ſtop, and obliged the unfortunate ſufferer to remain in that ſituation while he read to the people a newſpaper he had juſt received, and which contained the account of a recent victory. He then, addreſſing himſelf to monſieur de Vieux-fort, told him to carry to the other world his

deſpair

despair at these tidings of success, and at length ordered him to die.

Among the multitudes who were sacrificed to the barbarous caprices of Lebon, some were put to death upon pretences so trivial, that nothing can perhaps furnish a stronger proof of the absolute, the unblushing tyranny he exercised, than the daring effrontery with which he insulted the understanding as well as the feelings of the people, in the motives he alleged for inflicting the punishment of death.

The former marquis of Viefville, an old and gallant officer, had retired to end his days in privacy at a solitary spot called Steenmonde, in the department of the North. To this retreat he was accompanied by his daughter, an only child, who watched over the infirmities of his advanced age with unwearied tenderness, and whose filial piety shed a ray of happiness on those years which have no

pleasure

pleaſure in them. This venerable old man and his amiable daughter were the objects of general reſpect and eſteem. But virtue, which was a tacit reproach to the monſters who then devaſtated this unfortunate country, was as offenſive to them as the light of day to the ſullen bird of darkneſs. It happened that this family had for twelve years paſt been in poſſeſſion of a parrot, whom different perſons had taught its mimic leſſons. The eſtate of the marquis was ſituated on the limits of the German empire; part of his grounds belonged to that territory, and the parrot had been inſtructed to cry "Vive l'empereur!" and alſo to call the "petit Louis," the name of a young child who lived in the houſe. The agents of Lebon received intelligence, that thoſe forbidden words had been uttered by the parrot; the bird was denounced, ſeized as a criminal of importance, and depoſited in the houſe

 of

of a revolutionary commiſſary, where the feathered culprit repeated the guilty ſounds. The tidings ſpread through the city, of the arreſt of an audacious counter-revolutionary parrot, who boldly cried "Vive le roi!" and who, it was aſſerted, had even carried his effrontery to ſuch a length as to exclaim, "Vivent les prêtres! Vivent les nobles!" So far we may ſmile at the abſurdities of our tyrants; but that diſpoſition is converted into feelings of indignant horror, when we learn that an act of accuſation was immediately iſſued againſt M. Vieſville, his daughter, and her waiting-woman, who were dragged from their retirement, and led before the revolutionary tribunal.

The jury unanimouſly declared that thoſe perſons were convicted of being the authors or accomplices of a conſpiracy againſt liberty and the French people; and of unlawful reſiſtance to revolutionary

lutionary and republican government; having assiduously taught a parrot to utter the detestable phrase of "Vive le roi! vive l'empereur! vivent nos prêtres! et vivent les nobles!" and, by so doing, having provoked the re-establishment of royalty and of tyranny; for which reasons they were condemned to die.

The old man summoned all his fortitude, and went to the scaffold with the calmness of innocence; often lifting up his head, which was bowed down with age, to gaze upon his admirable daughter, who met death with the same courage, and who seemed to forget her own situation in that of her beloved parent.

Such are the crimes which cannot but excite horror in those who have lived at a distance from their sanguinary influence, but the reflection on which, to those who have been witnesses of their enormity, renders existence hateful.—

Such

Such are the monſters into which men are transformed by unlimited power; whether arrayed in imperial purple, and ſurrounded by pretorian guards; or wearing for a diadem a *jacobin cap*, and followed by an executioner and a *revolutionary* jury.

A peaſant of d'Achicourt, a village near Arras, came to ſell her butter in the town. As ſhe walked along a ſtreet, ſhe met a cart filled with victims who were going to execution.—"Voilà," ſaid this poor creature with naïveté, "voilà des gens qui meurent pour bien peu de choſe*!" She was inſtantly ſeized, and led to the tribunal of Lebon. During her trial ſhe held in her arms her infant of three months old, whom ſhe ſuckled. When ſhe heard her ſentence of death, "Quoi!" ſaid ſhe, "quoi, pour un mot †

* Thoſe people there die for very little.

† What! for that one word I ſaid, will you part the child and its mother?

que j'ai dit, vous allez féparer l'enfant d'avec la mere!" When fhe received the fatal ftroke, the ftreams of maternal nourifhment iffued rapidly from her bofom, and, mingled with her blood, bathed her executioner.

Among the numerous victims of Lebon, none excited more general fympathy than the family of monfieur de Mayoul, a former noble, who lived at Arras with his wife, his two daughters, and an infant fon. Monfieur de Mayoul was altogether confined to his houfe by the gout; and his daughters, two elegant and accomplifhed young women, who both touched the piano-forte with admirable fkill, endeavoured to make the talents they poffeffed fubfervient to the amufement of their infirm parent, and eftablifhed concerts at their houfe every week; when he was foothed with the pleafures of mufic. Sometimes they fought to vary his amufe-

ments

ments by dancing in his preſence with their companions; and the motive of filial piety which animated the diverſions of thoſe amiable young women, excited in the ſpectators a ſentiment like that of Sterne, when, at the peaſant's cottage, he fancied he ſaw "Religion mingling in the dance."

Two of monſieur de Mayoul's ſons had emigrated; but the family continued to live undiſturbed, and unſuſpected of having had any previous knowledge of that circumſtance. It happened that general Cuſtine, in paſſing through Arras, had ſhewn ſome civilities to madame de Mayoul and her daughters. When Cuſtine had periſhed, and when Lebon arrived at Arras, this circumſtance was imputed to the family of Mayoul as a crime. It was aſſerted that they were notorious ariſtocrates, and alſo that the young ladies had danced and ſung the very day when the news arrived of the defeat of one of

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the republican armies. Upon this pretext, madame de Mayoul, her two daughters, and a female servant were arrested, and thrown into prison. They were accused of being the authors, or accomplices, of a conspiracy framed against the liberty of the French people, of being the enemies of revolutionary government, of having held assemblies at their house in order to rejoice at the success of the armies of the tyrants, and of having approved of the emigration of the two young Mayouls.

Upon these accusations they were ordered to appear before the revolutionary tribunal; but notwithstanding the number of judicial assassinations which took place at that period, the young ladies, with the consciousness not merely of innocence, but of the motives of filial duty which had consecrated their amusements, fondly believed they had nothing to fear.

But

But madame de Mayoul was well aware of their danger.

The night preceding their appearance at the tribunal, after having been rigorously searched by the jailors, they were not, as was usual, thrown into a dungeon, but were allowed the indulgence of passing the night in the society of their fellow prisoners. One of those prisoners relates, that madame de Mayoul, addressing her children, said to them, "You know, my dear, my tender friends! you know that my first care in your education has been to excite in your minds such sentiments as might secure you the esteem of others, and the happiness of self-approbation."—"Ah yes," interrupted her daughters, "we have only been taught virtue by your precepts and your example." "I may die then," resumed madame de Mayoul, "with the satisfaction of thinking that I have never given you any improper counsel, and that my fel-

low citizens will believe I am altogether incapable of having led you to rejoice at the misfortunes of your country in the loſs of a battle." "Never, never!" they exclaimed, "you and we are alike incapable of ſuch conduct—we call upon the world to witneſs our innocence—it is impoſſible we can fail to juſtify ourſelves from ſuch an inculpation—and we ſhall be reſtored to liberty." "Ah, my children," reſumed madame de Mayoul, "inſtead of indulging that ſoothing hope, this is the moment to ſummon all your fortitude, and prepare for the worſt—for reſigning—" "Is it poſſible," they cried, "that a calumny ſo abſurd, ſo atrocious, can expoſe us to the pangs of ſeeing our mother periſh?—We think not of ourſelves—how could we wiſh to ſurvive you?" and throwing themſelves upon their mother's neck, they bathed her with their tears.

Madame de Mayoul then told them, that the

the only hope ſhe had left, was, that ſhe alone ſhould periſh, and that they would not be involved in the ſame proſcription. —"But if," ſhe continued, "they ſhould carry their barbarity to that exceſs, without conſideration for your youth, and for the authority which I may be ſuppoſed to have over your minds; if you muſt indeed ſhare my fate—then, my dear children, my beloved friends, arm yourſelves with my fortitude;—place all your confidence, as I do mine, in eternal juſtice. Perhaps the ſacrifice of our lives will be uſeful to our fellow citizens—will ſhew them the neceſſity of ſuppreſſing theſe tribunals of blood:—this idea animates my mind. Beſides, at all events, we ought to learn how to die. Let us throw ourſelves into the boſom of God. Oh my children, what gratitude we ſhall owe to the ſupreme being!—we ſhall die innocent!"

In ſuch converſation this unfortunate

family paſſed the night—their laſt night! The next morning they were led to the tribunal, and from thence to the ſcaffold. They died with the ſerenity of virtue, and with the hope of immortality.

The unfortunate monſieur de Mayoul, bereaved of all that endeared exiſtence, is bending with ſorrow to the grave. In vain his infant ſon would recall him to the enjoyment of life by his tender careſſes. There are evils too terrible for the weakneſs of humanity to bear, and which admit of no remedy but the grave.

LET-

LETTER VI.

AFTER the execution of the faction of Danton and that of the commune had taken place, both of which had been condemned on the most absurd and ill-founded accusations, as I have already related, the decemvirs found no longer any opposition to their tyranny, but saw the lives and fortunes of the people of France laid abjectly at their feet. But instead of employing their power to any useful purpose, or even to that of giving stability to their own government by favouring the weak after having overthrown the mighty, they became more profuse in the waste of blood, and atrocious without motive or end. Whether the tyrants suspected the fidelity of their tribunal,

or whether they thought that the business of death was not readily enough dispatched, those six commissions which I have before mentioned were also put into activity. The prisoners in general rejoiced at this institution; for they had the credulity to think that the evidence of civism which some could exhibit, and the exemption from any positive counter-revolutionary charge which others could prove, would obtain their release by these commissions, without undergoing the formality of a hearing before the tribunal; and as these commissions were not invested with the power of life and death, every one was anxious to gain an audience. The administrators of police, and the revolutionary committees, were ordered to procure printed lists, which in successive columns displayed the parentage, birth, and education, principles, conduct, and connections of every prisoner under their respective care, together

ther with the motives of their arreſt, and the opinions entertained of them by their accuſers. Each priſoner was to undergo a ſort of political interrogatory before the commiſſion; and as moſt of them had been long confined, and ſo many contradictory principles and ſtandards of patriotiſm had ſucceeded each other ſince their captivity began a priſoner muſt have had more than common ſagacity to have anſwered his catechiſt agreeably to the faſhion of the day. For, had he declared his belief in the divinity of reaſon, and aſſerted that prieſts were impoſtors, he would have been immediately condemned as a *Chaumettiſt*: or, had he profeſſed his patriotic faith in a black wig, dirty ſhirt, and pantaloons, he would have been ſentenced as a conſpirator of the *Hebert faction*. Indeed, to the great majority of priſoners, which conſiſted of people of former rank, this Babyloniſh language was unknown in al-

moſt all its dialect; and their interrogatory was altogether uſeleſs, their fate being previouſly decided. A friend of mine ſaw one day in the hands of a revolutionary commiſſary, one of thoſe blank liſts which he was going to fill up. "We have," ſays he, "in our *pigeon-houſe*," meaning the maiſon d'arrêt of his ſection, "about one hundred and twelve old birds and young; of theſe, about twenty or thirty we ſhall ſend to the *little window*, and the reſt ſhall ſet out on their *travels*." Such were the cant terms for death and baniſhment.

The operations of the popular commiſſions were altogether unknown till after the 10th of Thermidor, when their papers and liſts of ſentences were found among the manuſcripts of the tyrants. Some perſons, on whom only ſentence of deportation had been paſſed by the commiſſion, were afterwards condemned by the committee of public ſafety to death:

ſuch was the Maleſſi family, the father, mother, and two daughters, whoſe ſtory I have related. Their crime was ſtated in the papers of the commiſſion, and they were ſentenced to be baniſhed for being "exceſſively fanatical, and connected with prieſts; which connection *might* propagate the ſpirit of counter-revolution." Some were condemned for being enemies of the revolution, others for being of the caſt of nobility; ſome for what they had done, others for what they had not done; "n'ayant jamais rien fait pour la revolution *." One gentleman whom I knew, was doomed to baniſhment for having aſked with ſome impatience, a ſecond time, for his certificate at the ſection—"redemandant une ſeconde fois avec de menaces †." The two

* Having never done any thing for the revolution.

† Aſking for it a ſecond time with menaces.

young

young St. Chamands, beautiful girls of fifteen and nineteen years of age, ex-nobles, were condemned to deportation for *their oppoſition to the eſtabliſhment of civil and religious liberty*; "beaucoup prononcées en fanatiſme, et contre la liberté, *quoique très jeunes**." And alſo the family of Sourdeville, conſiſting of a mother and two daughters, whoſe only crime, as ſtated by the judges, was, that madame Sourdeville was "the mother of an emigrant, an ex-noble, and ariſtocrate, having her huſband and another ſon ſtruck by the ſword of the law;" and the two young ladies were likewiſe condemned with her, for ſtanding in the relation of ſiſter and daughter to the unfortunate father and brother who had periſhed.

The Robeſpierrian faction having thus ſeized on all the adminiſtrative powers,

* Strong fanatics, and enemies to liberty, although ſo young.

which

which they dispensed with their own hands; having crushed the chiefs of the other factions, and terrified their adherents into the most submissive silence, had arrived at the summit of their ambition; at a point where a few months before the most extravagant imagination would scarcely have placed them, and believed that their power was settled on a basis which could never be shaken. The departments also being now under the influence of the same terror as the city of Paris; the great instrument of its instruction and discipline, the revolutionary army, was broken as useless and cumbersome. The chief of this army, Ronsin, who had been one of the conductors of the war in the Vendée under the title of general minister, or minister general, had perished in what was called in the dialect of the time the Hebert *batch*; accused of alienating the affections of his troops from the committee

of

of public ſafety; which was probably true, ſince there was another faction in great vigour at that moment, which was the war faction, or the party of Bouchotte, and his ſecretaries Vincent and others, who periſhed at the ſame time as Hebert; this faction being not a little dangerous to the deſpotiſm of the auguſt decemvirate. The revolutionary army, which was now broken, had fulfilled its miſſion agreeably to its inſtitution and inſtructions, though it does not appear that the numerous and wanton acts of cruelty which it committed were either approved or ſanctioned by the convention; on the contrary, ſome very ſevere animadverſions were there made upon its conduct, and ſome ſtrong accuſations were brought againſt it, which were confirmed by the moſt authentic evidence.

The execution of the Danton faction, and the diſmiſſion of this army, were followed by other meaſures equally revo-

lutionary, in which we were ourſelves included; for it was at this period, the beginning of April, that the law took place which baniſhed nobles and foreigners from Paris, and which ordered all ſuſpected of conſpiracy to be ſent from all parts of the republic to be tried at Paris. As it was ſaid of Greece, that you could not move a ſtep without treading on a hiſtory, ſo it might now have been ſaid of Paris, that you could not paſs along a ſtreet without viewing ſome object of horror. Our baniſhment therefore, had it not been attended with the conſciouſneſs of what was paſſing in the ſcene we had left, would have been bliſs, compared to our reſidence in town.

Nothing perhaps contributed to miſlead the people of Europe ſo much, with reſpect to the ſtate of the French nation at this period, as the intelligence which was conveyed to them by the public papers. It required a more intimate

knowledge of French affairs than foreigners in general could find the means of obtaining, to reconcile the intelligence given in thofe newfpapers with the atrocities which they heard were committed. While pillage and murder, under the name of confifcation and punifhment, blackened every part of the republic; the papers prefented us with the moft elegant and philofophical reports on agriculture, literature, and the fine arts. But for the long catalogue of victims which clofed the evening paper, we might, even in our retreat at Marly, have fancied that the reign of philofophy had begun, and that, where there was apparently fo earneft a defire to civilize and fuccour mankind, there could not be fo monftrous an affemblage of treafon, atrocity, and carnage.

Moft of thefe interefting and inftructive reports, which tended to foften the hideoufnefs of the general outline, were

made

made by men who had not the means or the courage to ſtem the torrent, who ſighed in ſecret over its ravages, and employed their moments in doing ſomething which might tend to reſcue their country from the barbariſm into which it was haſtening. I particularly allude to the reports of Gregoire on the improvement of the language, on the public libraries, and on the eſtabliſhment of national gardens throughout the republic.

Sometimes the decemvirs themſelves relaxed from their habitual ferocity, and a report eſcaped from their lips, in which there was neither conſpiracy nor murder. Barrere, in a momentary caprice of virtue, pronounced a diſcourſe on the means of rooting out mendicity from the republic, replete with humanity and ideas of general benevolence.

Barrere, however, ſoon made the *amende honorable* to the ſyſtem he had abandoned for a moment, by delivering

immediately after his famous decree, "to make no English or Hanoverian prisoners," calling on the army, who happily for Gallic honour refused to hear him, "When victory shall put the English in your power, strike; let no one return to the land of Great Britain, nor one remain on the free soil of France." It is not generally known, that the reward held out to him for this act of boldness was, that although he had been a Feuillant, a Girondist, and of all parties in their turn; he was, immediately upon this report, thought worthy by Robespierre to be admitted into the sanctum sanctorum of the patriots, and was enrolled a *jacobin*.

The chief himself, who affected to stand aloof, and never to mingle personally in the wars of the lesser factions, but reserved himself for high exploits, having acknowledged the existence of the supreme being in the overthrow of the commune and the Dantonists, condescended

deſcended to give the convention a long lecture on theology in his report on national feſtivals.

I have already mentioned Voltaire's obſervation, that atheiſm might prove a greater ſcourge to mankind than ſanguinary ſuperſtition; but probably a greater ſcourge than either is powerful hypocriſy. We can guard our reaſon againſt ſophiſtry or violence, but from the tribute which hypocriſy pays to virtue, of wearing her ſemblance, we are more eaſily deceived. It was probably on account of the great danger of this vice to ſociety, that the ſaviour of mankind, while he looked on failings with indulgence, and on crimes with pardon, poured forth all the anathema of indignation and vengeance againſt hypocriſy. The trembling criminal whom the law condemned to death, ſaw mercy beaming in his eye, and the weeping penitent found reconciliation at his feet,

while he placed an eternal line of demarcation between the hypocritical Sanhedrim and the Almighty.

While Robeſpierre behind the ſcenes was iſſuing daily mandates for murder, we ſee him on the ſtage the herald of mercy and of peace—we ſee him affecting to pour the balm of conſolation into the wounds which he was himſelf inflicting; and, like the unrelenting inquiſitor, recommending to mercy the wretch whom he was delivering to torture. "Conſult," ſays this finiſhed actor, "only the good of the country, and the intereſts of mankind. Every inſtitution, every doctrine which conſoles and elevates the mind, ſhould be cheriſhed; reject all thoſe which tend to degrade and corrupt it. Re-animate, exalt every generous ſentiment, every ſublime moral idea, which your enemies have ſough to obliterate; draw together by the charm of friendſhip, and the ties of

 virtue,

virtue, those men whom they have attempted to separate. Who gave thee a mission to proclaim to the people that the Divinity exists not? Oh thou, who art enamoured of this sterile doctrine, but who never wast enamoured of thy country! what advantage dost thou find in persuading mankind that a blind fatality presides over their destiny, striking guilt and virtue as chance directs, and that the human soul is but a fleeting breath, extinguished at the gates of the tomb?

"Will man be inspired with more pure and elevated sentiments by the idea of annihilation, than by that of immortality? Will it produce more respect for his fellow creatures, and for himself? more attachment to his country? stronger resistance to tyranny? greater contempt of death? You, who regret a virtuous friend, you love to think that the nobler part of his being has escaped from death!

death ! You, who weep over the grave of a child, or of a wife, does *he* bring you conſolation who tells you that all which remains of them is but duſt ? Unhappy victim, who expireſt under the ſtroke of the aſſaſſin, thy laſt ſigh is an appeal to eternal juſtice ! the tyrant turns pale upon his triumphal car at the ſight of innocence upon the ſcaffold. Would virtue have this aſcendancy if the tomb placed on the ſame level the oppreſſor and the oppreſſed ? Wretched ſophiſt! by what right doſt thou wreſt the ſceptre of reaſon from the hands of innocence, to intruſt it to thoſe of guilt ? to throw a funereal veil over nature, to aggravate misfortune, to ſooth vice, to depreſs virtue, and degrade the human race ?

"In proportion to the degree of genius and ſenſibility with which man is endued, he clings to thoſe ideas which aggrandize his being, and elevate his heart ; and e doctrine of ſuch men becomes that

of the univerſe. Ah! ſurely thoſe ideas muſt have their foundation in truth! At leaſt I cannot conceive how nature could have ſuggeſted fictions to mankind more uſeful than realities; and if the exiſtence of God, if the immortality of the ſoul, were but dreams, they would ſtill be the moſt ſublime conceptions of the human mind!"

Though we were not deceived as to the habitual character of Robeſpierre, we imagined that the overthrow of all the rival factions might have ſoftened in ſome meaſure his obdurate heart. Every priſoner fondly looked forward to the feſtival of the ſupreme being as the epocha of liberty, or at leaſt of mercy.

"All the virtues," ſays Robeſpierre, "ſhall contend for the right of precedency at our feſtivals. Let us inſtitute the feſtival of glory; not of that glory which ravages and enſlaves the world, but of that which enlightens, comforts,

and gives it freedom; of that which, next to their country, is the chief object of worſhip to generous minds. "Let us inſtitute another feſtival more affecting ſtill; the feſtival of misfortune. Wealth and power are the idols of ſlaves: let *us* honour misfortune; misfortune, which humanity cannot chaſe from the earth, but which it can ſoften and cheer. Thou alſo ſhalt receive our homage, divine friendſhip! thou who didſt heretofore unite the hero and the ſage; thou who giveſt additional ſtrength to the lovers of their country; for whom traitors, aſſociated for the purpoſes of guilt, have worn only the hypocritical marks of pretended reſpect; divine friendſhip! amongſt republican Frenchmen thy power ſhall be acknowledged, and thy altars revered!"

However well Robeſpierre performed the hypocrite, he had not ſufficient addreſs to preſerve the character; for humanity,

manity, and misfortune, and glory, and friendſhip, enlightening and conſoling the world; and all the mockery and ſhow of the feſtival, with all the hopes and expectations of the unfortunate priſoners, vaniſhed into thin air. The feſtival, as has been related, took place on the 20th of Prairial; and on the 22d the law for condemnation *in maſs*, without witneſs or defence, paſſed the convention, and the work of death went on with redoubled ſpeed.

Had the tyrants who were thus ſucceſsful in their uſurpation, after cruſhing their immediate rivals, eſtabliſhed a more humane ſyſtem of government, of which they would have been the protectors, the world might ſtill have remained ignorant at leaſt of the exceſs of their crimes; and might have attributed their ſeverity to the perilous circumſtances in which they were placed, by the coaleſced powers without, and the intrigues of the

royal and ariſtocratical party within. In this caſe, none of thoſe atrocious acts which the fall of Robeſpierre has unveiled would have been known, and what is now the ſubject of general horror would have been regarded only as neceſſary evil.

The hiſtorian, therefore, who ſhould have taken the public acts, or the papers relating the tranſactions of the day, as the baſis of his information, would have deceived himſelf and poſterity. And even now the taſk will be difficult to tranſmit with accuracy and impartiality the hiſtory of that extraordinary epocha; which furniſhes a moſt awful and ſtupendous monument of all that is ſublime, and baſe; of all that is moſt virtuous, and moſt vile; of all that can excite mankind to the daring and heroic act, and of all that can make man with unutterable horror fly from man as from a peſtilence.

The moment, however, was now approaching when humanity was to be avenged

avenged of its tyrants for that long ſcene of multiplied crimes, of which what pen can make the recapitulation? "There "are times," Voltaire obſerves, "of "horrors and of madneſs among man-"kind, as there are times of peſtilence; "and this contagion has made the tour "of the world." France has juſt ſeen one of theſe epochas, which are the aſto-niſhment, the terror, and the ſhame of human nature. Happily they are rare in any hiſtory; and in the courſe of the ordinary calamities which are the ſcourge of civil ſociety, thoſe epochas may be conſidered as mortal maladies, amidſt that crowd of habitual infirmities which are inſeparable from our organization.

"When we dare reflect," ſays the illuſtrious advocate of humanity, Servan, "on all that has juſt paſſed, and repeat with a ſigh, *I alſo am a man*, we know not at what we ought moſt to bluſh—the crimes which human nature can commit,

 or

or thoſe which it can ſuffer; at the horrible wickedneſs of the few, or the ſtupid patience of the whole.

"We have ſeen what a wicked man would have bluſhed at foreſeeing, and what a good man would have feared to imagine; we have ſeen what thoſe who have committed would not have believed in the hiſtory of others; we have ſeen in one moment, and as it were by a thunder-bolt, the whole of France become only one frightful chaos, or rather one vaſt conflagration; every principle, conſecrated by neceſſity in every place, at all periods, and in every heart, ſpurned as annihilated; the overthrow of every cuſtom, nay of prejudices and even habits; the almoſt total exchange of property, which is more aſtoniſhing than its ruin; beggary taking place of wealth, and wealth not daring to put itſelf into the place of beggary; in the midſt of which, a band of villains, but a handful com-

pared

pared to the whole nation, ſcattered throughout the republic, ſubdue a people victorious without, and armed within. And this band of monſters were ſtil greater in impudence than crimes; parading from city to city, from ſtreet to ſtreet, from place to place, from houſe to houſe, with robbery, pillage, famine, and aſſaſſination in their train; ſtriking with the ſame poniard the prudence which was ſilent, or the truth that had the boldneſs to ſpeak; purſuing the fearful man in his flight, after having murdered the intrepid citizen who ſcorned to fly. We have ſeen indeed the moment, when every man in France who was not a decided villain could not, without riſking death every hour of the day, either be ſilent or ſpeak out, either ſtay or fly;—and this was ſuffered by Frenchmen at the very period when they were the conquerors of the world."

It was impoſſible that this ſtate of ex-

treme violence could be permanent. The firſt dawning hope of deliverance aroſe from the quarrels of the different factions; it was therefore with ſatisfaction, the cauſe of which the friends of liberty were cautious to diſſemble, that they ſaw the party of the commune, of the war-miniſter, and of Danton, ſent to the ſcaffold; for there ſeemed no reaſon why other factions ſhould not ariſe to diſplace, and alſo to bring to puniſhment, thoſe who now wielded the revolutionary ſceptre.

Though Danton was deſtroyed, his party was ſtill numerous in the convention; and it was aſſerted, that had he appeared at the tribune when he was accuſed, and denounced Robeſpierre, he would have ſent his rival to the ſcaffold. Robeſpierre, who was conſcious that he had not ſubdued the ſpirit, though he had taken off the head, of the faction, thought, like Cæſar, that nothing was done while any thing remained unfiniſh-

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ed. He ſaw the difficulty that would attend his operations, if, to uſe Camille Deſmoulins' expreſſion, he continued to make "des coups reglés" in the foreſt of the convention, and therefore conceived, it ſeems, the hardy project of felling the whole wood at one ſtroke; of breaking up the convention as a gangrened body not worth partial applications, and taking the care of the ſtate into his own hands.

The committees of public and general ſafety, which were the committees of government, were abſolute in their adminiſtration, and the convention had dwindled into the moſt contemptible inſignificance. The deputies met to hear a report for the ſake of form, to clap their hands on the re-election of their tyrants when the periods arrived, or huzza at a carmagnol of Barrere; and were ſent away at four o'clock to dinner, to call again the next morning at twelve.

Although Robeſpierre had ſucceeded in breaking them into this ſubordination, he had not ſo entirely checked the ambition of his fellow riders; for there were ſome, who, though better diſſemblers than the members of the late commune, beheld with as unſatisfied an eye the ſtretches which Robeſpierre's faction were making; and which they ſaw would puſh them from their ſeats, as they had aided him in removing others.

The firſt ſtep towards the acquiſition of abſolute power was the concentration of all authority in the committee of public ſafety. Robeſpierre had filled the vacant places in the commune with his own creatures, and the jacobins were his devoted ſubjects. All that remained, therefore, was to annihilate the powers of the committee of general ſafety, which took care of the lives and properties of the citizens, while the other was charged with the external affairs and the general

ral weal of the ſtate; and unite in this laſt both individual and public welfare. To this propoſition the members of the committee of general ſafety did not diſcover any readineſs to aſſent; and though Robeſpierre had reigned with uncontrolled ſway ſince the death of the Gironde, his aſcendancy over his aſſociates had not reached ſo far as to prevail with them to bend their necks, like the herd of the convention and the people, to his yoke.

Theſe ſtruggles had made a formal diviſion at this period in the two committees, which had conſiſted for ſome time of two parties; but whoſe coalition had been cemented hitherto by crimes and by blood. Robeſpierre's party in the committee of public ſafety was compoſed of St. Juſt, Couthon, and Barrere; in that of general ſafety, of David, Vadier, and ſome others; and though theſe committees were at hoſtili-

ties with each other, the intereſt of the ruffians was too cloſely united to bring their quarrel before the public. The ambition of Robeſpierre embarraſſed them much, and it was more than once propoſed that recourſe ſhould be had to the poniard. This plan, which was highly reliſhed by many members of the committee, was vehemently oppoſed by a citizen, who, having been admitted into their councils, was often an inſtrument in the hands of providence of leſſening individual horrors, and of ſaving many from deſtruction. He repreſented to them all the evils that would neceſſarily reſult from ſuch an act of premature violence; that they might indeed kill the tyrant, but that they would infallibly be the victims themſelves; that he would be conſidered by the people as a martyr, and they would be reputed his murderers; while forbearance and temporizing would puſh him on to ſome act of in

conſideration

confideration and folly, which they, who knew his treafonable defigns, might lay hold on as an attempt to deftroy the liberty of the republic; and the people would send him with execrations to the fcaffold, whom, in the prefent ftate of things, they would perhaps be ignorantly induced to honour as a faint.

LET-

LETTER VII.

ROBESPIERRE, finding the committee ſo little inclined to pay him that ſubmiſſive homage which was yielded to him by the reſt of France, abſented himſelf both from them and the convention during ſome weeks; and began to prepare for open hoſtilities, with the aſſiſtance of the jacobins, the revolutionary tribunal, and the regenerated commune. The united ſtrength of theſe bodies was very formidable, and the convention had nothing to oppoſe to them but the poſſibility of exciting rebellion againſt the conſtituted authorities; for the military force was in the hands of Henriot, who was the devoted ſlave of Robeſpierre; and the civil and revolutionary concerns of the ſections of Paris cen-

centred in the commune, the directors of which were of his immediate appointment. The jacobins bore ſway over the whole, and he was the abſolute monarch of the jacobins.

When Robeſpierre thought that his plan was ſufficiently matured, he appeared at the tribune of the convention, which he had not entered for ſome time, and made a vehement harangue on the oppreſſion which was exerciſed over himſelf, and againſt the operations of the committees; promiſing the convention, that he would propoſe the only means fitted to ſave the country.

His ſpeech excited much agitation; the members appeared to liſten to him with ſenſations ſimilar to thoſe of the inhabitants of ſome great city, who hear the murmurs of the earthquake, and feel the ground ſhake beneath them, but are ignorant where the gulph will open, and what part, or if the whole, will be ſwal-

lowed

lowed up. The convention, although alarmed, and doubtful how to act, yet ſeeing the proſpect of irremediable ruin before their eyes through the thin covering which the tyrant had thrown over his deſigns, aſſumed ſufficient courage to debate on the prominent parts of his ſpeech, which they ordered to be printed.

Having opened himſelf thus far to the convention, Couthon explained the ſpeech more fully at the jacobins' in the evening. There he denounced the two committees of government as traitors, and inſiſted that the perſons who compoſed thoſe committees ſhould be excluded from the ſociety. The preſident of the revolutionary tribunal was the next commentator on Robeſpierre's ſpeech, and pronounced without any reſerve, that the convention ſhould be purified alſo; which implied the entire diſſolution of the repreſentative body.

This purification was not to be con-

fined to the convention; for the conspiracy against the republic had, to borrow the language of these regenerators, its authors and accomplices in every quarter of Paris. The fate of one description of those conspirators was so certain, that their graves were literally dug before their eyes, and graves of no ordinary extent. These were the multitude of prisoners who were waiting a more formal, but not less certain death, before the revolutionary tribunal. It had been proposed to build a scaffolding in the great hall of the Palais, resembling the hall of Westminster, where two or three hundred might be tried at once, instead of *fifty* or *sixty* as was the present mode. But it was now thought the great ends of national justice might be better answered by what was called emptying the prisons at once; and that, as the sentence of these conspirators was already passed, the formality of their appear

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ance at a tribunal might be diſpenſed with. For ſome days therefore labourers had been employed in ſeveral priſons of Paris, in making large excavations in their reſpective court-yards; and it was not concealed from many of the priſoners by their keepers, and even by the adminiſtrators of the police, how they were to be filled up. We cannot heſitate in believing this new inſtance of atrocity, when we compare the revolutionary language held by the chiefs on the neceſſity of quick expedients to get rid of traitors, together with the changes made juſt at this period in the keepers of the various priſons; ſince thoſe who had moſt diſtinguiſhed themſelves for firmneſs of nerve in the commiſſion of murders, had ſucceeded the ordinary ruffians*; and

* The jailor moſt celebrated for his atrocities was Benoit, who had been an executioner under the orders of Collot d'Herbois at Lyons, and who at

and alſo, what is more certain evidence, the information of many of the priſoners, who, confined in different priſons, agree in relating the ſame facts. There is alſo little doubt that the nobles and ſtrangers, who by the law of the fifteenth of Germinal were diſperſed through the various communes of the republic, under the eye of tyrants, who were informed of their reſidence by the decadary returns of the ſeveral municipalities which they inhabited, would have ſhared the fate of the priſoners.

The convention in the mean time obſerved their uſual ſubmiſſive ſilence, although they well knew that certain

at this period was appointed keeper of the Luxembourg. His ferocious manners formed a lamentable contraſt with the gentleneſs of the *good* Benoit whom I have mentioned in my former letters. I ſhall ſubjoin an article concerning him, which I have juſt received from the gentleman who has tranſlated thoſe letters into the German language. See Appendix, No. III.

portions

portions of them were designated, lists of proscription having been discovered from the carelessness of those who were to co-operate in the bloody work. One was found by accident among the papers of Vilate, one of the revolutionary jury, who, being refractory on some particular point, had been arrested.

The same state of stupefaction which had led the convention to see former masses torn from their body, seemed still to benumb their faculties. Robespierre, whose secession from the committees had not rendered him less the master of their operations, flattered himself that the task was now perfectly easy; for, independent of his irresistible phalanxes, the jacobins, the revolutionary committees, the regenerated commune, and the military force of Paris, the terror which he had infused into the convention came powerfully to his aid.

The hours of the tyrant were never-

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theleſs numbered, and the moment approached when he was to make his account with eternal juſtice. The attack of Robeſpierre upon his colleagues on the morning of the 8th of Thermidor, and the commentary made by his accomplices at the jacobins' the ſame evening, rouſed the convention from their diſhonourable lethargy, and they became bold from deſperation.

The eventful day at length arrived, and both parties took their places in the hall of the convention with an air of affected calmneſs, while ſome ordinary buſineſs of the day went on; for no one even of the proſcribed members ſeemed anxious to become the Curtius of the reſt, although the next meeting of the jacobins, or the next motion of the municipality, might have decided the arreſt of the whole of the convention, except Robeſpierre's faction. But St. Juſt having aſcended the tribune, and begun a

ſpeech

ſpeech in the ſame whining tone which Robeſpierre had uſed the preceding day, complaining of the bad treatment he had received, and of the treaſon of his colleagues in the committee; Tallien, and Billaud Varennes, the former of whom was on the liſt of proſcription, and the latter Robeſpierre's rival in the committee, overpowered his voice by their denunciations againſt the perfidious and horrible deſigns of the tyrants, which they unveiled to the convention. Robeſpierre, who was ignorant of this counter conſpiracy, though he ſaw a diſpoſition the preceding day to mutiny, was ſtruck as with a thunderbolt. He made at length ſome attempts to ſpeak; but his voice was drowned in the denunciations poured forth againſt him. Tallien inſiſted on his arreſt: but the convention, under the impreſſion of its habitual terror, contented itſelf with pronouncing that of his inferior agents;

and it was not till Robeſpierre had mounted the tribune, and, with the air of a chief, called the convention a band of robbers, that Vadier, one of his former accomplices, obtained the vote of accuſation, by turning evidence againſt him. Robeſpierre, ſeeing himſelf beſet on every ſide, threw a look of piercing indignation towards his brother mountaineers, and reproached them for their cowardice. Hearing curſes poured down upon him from every quarter, and ſeeing that his kingdom was departed from him, he called out in the fury of deſperation to be led to death; which the convention virtually decreed, in an unanimous vote of accuſation againſt him. His colleagues St. Juſt, Couthon, Le Bas, and his own brother, were arreſted at the ſame time, and after ſome reſiſtance were led away to priſon.

Thus far the convention had been ſucceſsful; for all parties had concurred in

in the humiliation of a tyrant, by whom all had been equally oppreſſed. But the ſcene which the city preſented was truly alarming. The jacobins, hearing of the inſurrection againſt Robeſpierre, immediately aſſembled. The commune, which was ordered to the bar of the convention, inſtead of obeying, rang the tocſin to call the citizens to arms. Henriot, the commander of the military force, who had been arreſted and led to the committee of general ſafety, was releaſed, and parading the ſtreets on horſeback, while the cannoneers under his orders had loaded their pieces. Robeſpierre with his colleagues was delivered from priſon by the adminiſtrators of the police, and, being inſtalled at the hotel de ville, had outlawed the whole convention.

Had the conſpirators acted with ordinary ſagacity; had they immediately marched their cannon againſt the convention, which for ſome hours was only

guarded by a ſmall number of armed citizens, the triumph of Robeſpierre and the municipality would have been complete. But, happily for humanity, they waſted thoſe moments in deliberations and harangues; whilſt the convention, taking courage at the goodneſs of its cauſe, and in the hope of ſome ſparks of remaining virtue in the people, diſcovered a diſpoſition to defend themſelves, and in a ſhort time thouſands flew to their aid. The hall of the jacobins was cleared by the energy of Legendre; and ſeven deputies were named as generals for the conventional cauſe againſt the commune, who were now declared to be in a ſtate of rebellion, and put out of the law. Such at this moment was the ſtate of Paris, when the commander of the military force, Henriot, appeared in the court of the convention, and ordered it to ſurrender. But he came too late: the convention was now prepared for de-

fence, and anſwered his ſummons by putting him out of the law as well as his employers.

This "hors la loi" has the ſame effect on a Frenchman as if it were the cry of the peſtilence: the object becomes civilly excommunicated, and a ſort of contamination is apprehended if you paſs through the air which he has breathed. Such was the effect which this decree produced upon the cannoneers, who had planted their artillery againſt the convention: without receiving any further inſtructions, except hearing that the commune were "hors la loi," they inſtantly turned their pieces. Henriot, ſeeing this unexpected reſiſtance, and finding that the ſections meant to deliberate before they put the convention to death, ſlunk back to the commune, who were alſo in a profound ſtate of deliberation. In the mean time the convention had ſent deputies into every quarter of the

town,

town, to rally the citizens around the affembly; and they fucceeded fo well, that in a few hours the convention had an hundred thoufand men to march againft the commune. The hotel de ville was now befieged in its turn; and might have made a formidable refiftance, had not the cannoneers of that quarter alfo heard of the "hors la loi," and refufed to fire their pieces; while the immenfe multitude that were idly affembled in the place de Greve before the hotel, had taken poffeffion of the carriages of the artillery to ferve as ladders, from which they could ftare into the windows, and crowds were mounted on the cannon to enjoy the fpectacle. The confpirators now, abandoned, and, like Nero, having no friend or enemy at hand to difpatch them, had no means of efcaping from ignominy but by a voluntary death, which they had not the courage to give themfelves.

Catiline, it is faid, was found at a con-

ſiderable diſtance from his friends, mingled amongſt his enemies, with a countenance bold and daring in death. It is ſomewhat remarkable, that nearly two years ſince a writer, drawing the parallel, or rather the diſſimilitude of character between Catiline and Robeſpierre, obſerved, that whenever the deciſive moment of conteſt ſhould ariſe between the parties which were formed after the 10th of Auguſt, Robeſpierre would periſh; not plunged into the ranks of his foes, but be ſtruck by ſome ignoble hand, and die from a wound in his back.

The conſpirators, ſeeing that all reſiſtance was fruitleſs, hid themſelves or took to flight. Robeſpierre was found in an apartment of the hotel, and was ſternly reminded by a gendarme that a ſupreme being really exiſted. Robeſpierre held a knife in his hand, but had not courage to uſe it; the gendarme fired at him with a

piſtol,

pistol, and broke his jaw-bone; he fell, without uttering a word. His brother threw himself out of a window, and broke his thigh by the fall. Henriot had given his associates the strongest assurances that he was secure of the military force of Paris; and Coffinhal, a judge of the revolutionary tribunal, when he saw that all was lost, poured forth the most bitter invectives against Henriot for having thus deceived them; and at length seizing him, in a fit of rage and despair, threw him out of a window. Henriot concealed himself a short time in a common-sewer, from whence he was dragged after having lost an eye. These criminals, with their accomplices, were brought, some on biers and others on foot, to the convention; from whence they were all sent to the Conciergerie, except Robespierre, who was carried into the anti-chamber of the committee of public safety, where those who attended him told me he lay stretch-

ed motionleſs on a table four hours, with his head bound up, and his eyes ſhut; making no anſwer to the taunting queſtions that were put to him, but pinching his thighs with convulſive agony, and ſometimes looking round when he imagined no one was near. He underwent the operation of dreſſing his wounds, in order to prolong his exiſtence a few hours; after which he was ſent, with the reſt of his aſſociates, to the tribunal. The identification of their perſons was all that was neceſſary, ſince they were *hors la loi*, and the ſentence of execution againſt them was demanded by their former friend, Fouquier Tainville.

On the evening of the 10th of Thermidor (the 28th of July 1794), theſe criminals were led to the ſcaffold. The frantic joy which the Pariſians diſcovered on this occaſion was equal to the puſillanimous ſtupor into which they had been hitherto plunged. The maledictions

that

that accompanied the tyrants on their way to execution were not, as ufual, the clamour of hireling furies; they proceeded with honeft indignation from the lips of an oppreffed people, and burft involuntarily from the heart of the fatherlefs and the widow. These monfters were made to drink the cup of bitternefs to the very dregs. Many of them were fo disfigured by wounds and bruifes, that it was difficult to diftinguifh their perfons, and little attention had been paid to alleviate thefe intermediate fufferings. In the mafs perifhed Robefpierre, his co-adjutors Couthon and St. Juft; Henriot, the commander of the military force of Paris; the mayor of Paris; the national agent; the prefident of the jacobins; the prefident of the revolutionary tribunal; the fans-culotte preceptor of the young dauphin; and the agents of thefe leaders, to the number of twenty-two. The following day the members of the commune of

Paris, to the amount of ſeventy-two, were beheaded on the place de Greve; and twelve, on the day after, completed the liſt of the chiefs of the preſent conſpiracy.

The bar of the convention, which had hitherto been the echo of the tyrants, applauding every barbarous meaſure, and ſanctioning every atrocious deed, now reſounded with gratulation and triumph upon the victory, and aſſurances, ſince it was gained, that thoſe who offered the addreſs would have ſhed the laſt drop of blood to have obtained it; or, according to the accuſtomed phraſe, "have made a rampart of their bodies." This inconſiſtency on the part of the Pariſians will not appear ſurpriſing, when we reflect that the city was divided into two parties—the murderers, who were now overthrown, and thoſe who were to have been murdered, and who now exulted in their deliverance.

Conſidering the immenſe influence

which the terrorift faction, the denomination now given to Robefpierre's fupporters, had obtained both in Paris and in the departments, the whole of the adminiftrations, both civil and military, throughout the republic being put into their hands, it is fcarcely credible that fo mighty an hoft fhould have been overthrown by one fingle effort, and in which no measures were prepared or combined.

The inhabitants of thofe *living fepulchres*, the prifons of Paris, felt with moft ecftacy this happy revolution. Hope had entirely forfaken them; they had refigned themfelves in fixed defpair to that fate, which they believed to be inevitable.

The prifoners knew that fome extraordinary fcenes were paffing in the city; for in all the prifons they had been ordered to retire to reft one hour earlier than ufual, and to leave their doors unlocked; and at the fame time they ob-

ſerved an air of myſtery on the faces of their keepers, which ſeemed to bode ſome near and dreadful evil.

The ringing of the tocſin during the night ſerved to increaſe their apprehenſions; they imagined a great tumult agitated the city, but concluded that it was only ſome ſtroke of more extenſive tyranny that was about to be inflicted, and that would conſolidate more firmly the power of the tyrants. In this ſtate of torture they paſſed the night, and waited the light of the morning in all the pangs of terror and diſmay. At length the morning returned, and the important ſecret had not yet penetrated the walls of the priſons; but a feeling like hope animated the ſinking ſpirits of the priſoners, when, with the ſearching eye of anxious expectation, they ſought to read their fate in the countenances of their jailors, and there diſcovered evident marks of diſappointment and dejection,

while ſome relaxation from their habitual ſeverity ſucceeded the extraordinary precautions and rigour of the preceding day.

They were not however long held in ſuſpenſe. In ſome of the priſons the newſpaper of the paſt evening was procured at an enormous price: but who could rate too high the purchaſe which brought the tidings of deliverance? In ſome of the priſons, the citizens who were obliged to perform the painful office of guards within their gloomy courts, contrived to tell the priſoners in monoſyllables breathed in whiſpers (for all intercourſe between the guards and the priſoners was ſternly prohibited), that the hour of hope and mercy beamed upon their ſufferings. In other priſons they were informed of what was paſſing, by women who diſplayed upon the roofs of houſes, which overlooked at a diſtance

 the

the prison walls, the names of Robes-pierre and his associates, written in such broad characters that the prisoners with the aid of glasses could read them plainly; and after presenting the name, the generous informer shewed by expressive gestures, that the head of him who bore that name had fallen.

A military gentleman who was confined in the prison of the Abbey told me, that, after having passed the night of the 27th of July, in the immediate expectation of being massacred, all his fears were instantly relieved by a very slight circumstance. The prisoners had long been denied the consolation of any interview with their friends; the utmost privilege allowed them was that of writing upon the direction of the packets of linen, when they were sent to their houses to be washed, or received from thence, after a very strict examination, "Je me

porte bien *." The wife of this gentleman, to whom ſhe was tenderly attached, uſed every day to write with an aching heart upon the packet, " Je me porte bien." On the morning of the 28th of July, the packet arrived as uſual; but one monoſyllable and one note of admiration were added to the direction: " Ah, que je me porte bien † !" With an emotion of tranſport which told him his misfortunes were at an end, he read thoſe little words, and hailed the bleſſed augur.

During many hours the fall of the tyrant was repeated with cautious timidity through the dreary manſions of confinement, and the priſoners related to each other the eventful tale, as if they feared that

> " More than echoes talked along the walls."

Even the minds of thoſe who were at li-

* I am well. † Ah, how well I am!

berty,

berty, were too ſtrongly fettered by terror to bear the ſudden expanſion of joy; and the gentleman who firſt brought the tidings to my family that Robeſpierre was arreſted, after having been blamed for his imprudence in mentioning ſuch a circumſtance before ſome ſtrangers who were preſent, ſaid in a tone of reſentment, "This is the fourth family which I have endeavoured to make happy by this news; and inſtead of being thanked for the intelligence, all are afraid to hear it."

At length, however, the clouds of doubt, miſtruſt, and apprehenſion vaniſhed, the clear ſunſhine of joy beamed upon every heart, and every eye was bathed in tears of exultation. Yet thoſe overwhelming emotions were empoiſoned by bitter regrets. Every individual had to lament ſome victim to whom he was bound by the ties of nature, of gratitude, or of affection; and many were doomed to mourn over a friend, a father,

or a husband, whom a month, a week, a day would have snatched from death. With peculiar pangs those victims were regretted, who were led to execution, to the number of nearly sixty, on the 27th of July, without guards, the military having been called to the aid of the convention on the arrest of Robespierre. It was recollected when too late, it was re-echoed through Paris with a general feeling of remorse, that one word might have rescued those last martyrs of tyranny from death, and that yet they were suffered to perish.

If any private individual had from the gallery, or at the bar of the convention, demanded a respite, there is no doubt it would immediately have been granted. The heart dilates at the idea of that sublime happiness which he would have prepared for himself, who should thus have rescued the innocent. What evil could malignity or misfortune have in-

flicted

flicted upon a mind, which could have repelled them with the conſciouſneſs of ſuch an action? But tyranny, like "guilt, makes cowards of us all;" every man trembled for himſelf; the event of the day yet hung in ſuſpenſe, and the ſufferers were left to die.

Soon after the execution of Robeſpierre, the committee of general ſafety appointed a deputation of its members to viſit the priſons, and ſpeak the words of comfort to the priſoners; to hear from their own lips the motives of their captivity, and to change the bloody rolls of proſcription into regiſters of promiſed freedom. In the mean time orders for liberty arrived in glad ſucceſſion; and the priſons of Paris, ſo lately the abodes of hopeleſs miſery, now exhibited ſcenes which an angel of mercy might have contemplated with pleaſure.

The firſt perſons releaſed from the Luxembourg were monſ. and madame

Bitauby, two days after the fall of Robe-ſpierre. When they departed, the priſoners, to the amount of nine hundred perſons, formed a lane to ſee them paſs; they embraced them, they bathed them with tears, they overwhelmed them with benedictions, they hailed with tranſport the moment which gave themſelves the earneſt of returning freedom: but the ſoul has emotions for which the lips have no utterance, and the feelings of ſuch moments may be imagined, but cannot be defined.

Crowds of people were conſtantly aſſembled at the gates of the priſons, to enjoy the luxury of ſeeing the priſoners ſnatched from their living tombs, and reſtored to freedom: that very people, who had beheld in ſtupid ſilence the daily work of death, now melted in tears over the ſufferers, and filled the air with acclamations at their releaſe.

Among a multitude of affecting ſcenes which

which paſſed at thoſe priſon-doors, where the wife, after a ſeparation like that of death, again embraced her huſband—where children clung upon the necks of their long-loſt parents—none were more intereſting than the unbounded tranſports of a little boy of ſix years of age, the ſon of monſ. de F——, when his father met him at the gate, and while he preſſed him in his arms with an emotion which choked his voice. This child was particularly remarked, having engaged the affections of many perſons in the neighbourhood by his behaviour during his father's long confinement. He had never failed to come every day bounding along the terrace of the Luxembourg, till he approached the walls of the priſon; and when he reached the ſentinel, he always pulled off his hat very reſpectfully, and, looking up in his face with a ſupplicating air, enquired, *Citoyen, vous me permettrez de ſaluer mon papa?*

*papa** ? and unlefs when he fpoke to thofe "who never had a fon," his petition was generally granted. He then ufed to kifs his hands again and again to his father, and play over his fportive tricks before him, while the parent's tears followed each other in fwift fucceffion.

All the little artifices which affection had prompted to cheat the watchful feverity of unrelenting jailors, and foften the agonies of feparation by the charm of mutual intercourfe, were now difclofed, And it was found that love and friendfhip had been more vigilant than fufpicion itfelf; had eluded its wakeful eye; and, in fpite of triple bolts, and guards, and fpies, had poured forth thofe effufions of tendernefs, thofe affurances of fidelity not to be fhaken by the frown of tyrants, which cheered the gloom of the prifon, and awakened in the heart

* Citizen, you will give me leave to kifs my hand to my papa ?

of

of the captive thoſe luxurious feelings that ariſe when

——— " ſweet remembrance sooths
With virtue's kindeſt looks the aching breaſt,
And turns our tears to rapture."

Sometimes pieces of paper careleſsly torn, and ſent at different periods wrapped round fruit or vegetables, when the ſcattered ſcraps were rejoined by the priſoner, communicated the tidings he was moſt anxious to hear. Sometimes a tender billet was found incloſed within a roaſted fowl; and when the period arrived at which no nouriſhment was ſuffered to be ſent to the priſoners, the fainting frame was occaſionally revived by rich and cordial wines, which were conveyed on the pretence of ſickneſs, labelled as bottles of medicine. But one of the pious frauds moſt ſucceſsfully employed was the agency of a dog. His maſter was confined in the priſon of the Luxembourg,

embourg, and the faithful animal contrived every day to get into the priſon, and penetrate as far as his chamber, when he uſed to overwhelm him with careſſes, and ſeem to participate in his diſtreſs. His wife, who was at liberty, but deprived of all intercourſe with her huſband, uſed to careſs the dog upon his return from the priſon with the ſame kind of emotion with which Werter gazed upon the little ragged boy whom he ſent to ſee Charlotte when he was prevented from ſeeing her himſelf. At length the idea ſuggeſted itſelf to the lady of incloſing a billet within the dog's collar; ſhe contrived to give her huſband ſome intimation of her ſcheme, which ſhe immediately put in practice. From that period the four-legged courier, furniſhed with his inviſible packet, marched boldly forward every day at the appointed hour through hoſts of foes, and, in defiance of revolutionary edicts, laid

his

his dispatches and his person at his master's feet.

Paris was now converted into a scene of enthusiastic pleasure. The theatres, the public walks, the streets, resounded with the songs of rejoicing; the people indulged themselves in all the frolic gaiety which belongs to their character; and all the world knows that joy is no where so joyous as at Paris, which seems the natural region of Pleasure, who, though scared away for a while by sullen tyrants, soon returns upon her light wing, like the wandering dove, and appears to find on no other spot her proper place of rest.

Upon the fall of Robespierre, the terrible spell which bound the land of France was broken; the shrieking whirlwinds, the black precipices, the bottomless gulphs, suddenly vanished; and reviving nature covered the wastes with flowers, and the rocks with verdure.

All

All the fountains of public prosperity and public happiness were indeed poisoned by that malignant genius, and therefore the streams have since occasionally run bitter; but the waters are regaining their purity, are returning to their natural channels, and are no longer disturbed and sullied in their course.

I shall, in a short time, send you an account of the events which have succeeded the fall of Robespierre, and which wind up the singular drama of revolutionary government conformably to the most rigid rules of poetical justice; or rather let me say, that we see heaven calming the doubts of human weakness on its mysterious ways, by the triumph of innocence and the expiation of guilt.

The eventful scenes of the last winter will lead us to the present moment at which revolutionary government ceases, and a new constitution is presented to the people of France. The vessel of the

the ſtate, built with toil and trouble, and cemented with blood, will ſoon be launched. We have yet ſeen nothing but disjointed planks, and heard only the diſcordant turbulence of the hammer and the anvil. The fabric is at length erected; and it now remains to be tried, if it be framed of materials ſufficiently firm and durable to defy the ſhock of the conflicting elements, and float majeſtically down the ſtream of time.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

At the Prison of the Force, December 5th, O. S.
5th Nivose.

I HAVE just read the evening paper: I find my name in the decree of accusation proposed by Robespierre; in a few moments, perhaps, I shall be thrown into the dungeons of the Conciergerie. I know not on what grounds an indictment can be found against me, after four months having elapsed since the trial of my father, during which time I have been in no respect inculpated; and I shall find no difficulty in proving my innocence

against any accusation whatever. Nevertheless, the minds of the jury are sometimes *so easily and so suddenly convinced*, that I feel it is my duty to throw a few lines on paper to fill up what I may omit at the tribunal. I am trying to conjecture what may be imputed to me. I owe it to my son, to my wife, to my friends, and may at least an unsullied reputation be an heritage which no tribunal can take away! And first, I find my name joined with those of Biron and Dietrich. [Here he observes that his connections with either were of too slight a nature to be imputed by the tyrants to him as a crime; though he considers them both as men of character and integrity. He then continues:] It is probably on the subject of my diplomatic career at the epocha prior to the war, when I was sent on a secret mission to the duke of Brunswick, that I am about to be questioned. The nature of this last negotiation would

have

have imposed silence on me for ever, if powerful reasons and imperious necessity did not oblige me to break it at present.

The minister Narbonne, whom I know but slightly, and with whom I never had any other connection than that of which I am going to speak, sent to me at Strasbourg, where I was at the end of November 1791, and informed me that the king was desirous of sending me to the duke of Brunswick to propose to him to take the command in chief of the French armies. On the first view, this project excited only doubts and objections in my mind. Narbonne was pressing, and seemed anxious for the regeneration of the army, and the solid establishment of the constitution. He gave me, as well as his colleague the minister of foreign affairs, Lessart, proofs and indications by which I believed, and was bound to believe, that Lewis the sixteenth was equally solicitous on this account. I never saw Lessart but

two or three times; he appeared to adopt, though with less warmth, the project of Narbonne, and begged me to compose a memorial on this subject, detailing the different considerations which I had presented. When I spoke of the impossibility of succeeding in such a negotiation, Narbonne denied this, and agreed only in admitting that there might be some difficulties.

When I spoke of the impression it might possibly make on the public, and the influence it would have on the cause of liberty, he answered that the best patriots were in raptures at the project, and that its success alone, by giving us consideration abroad, and order in the army, would prevent a war, and secure us against any fear of foreign invasion, on account of the reputation and great talents of the duke of Brunswick. I at length wrote the memorial which the two ministers had requested. I presented

in

in a forcible manner the almost insurmountable difficulties which resulted from the political and military character of the duke of Brunswick, from his quality as prince of the empire, as chief of the eldest branch of the house of Hanover, the ally of that of Prussia. I also observed, that whoever should undertake such a mission ought to be authorized to speak of affairs foreign to this special proposition; and I concluded by saying, that if I undertook it, I was almost certain of returning without having made the least progress in this delicate business; and that I was determined not to hazard such a proposition, if there was any danger of its being received in a manner injurious to the dignity of the national character, and without that respect and attention which could alone justify its being made.

My memorial was read in the council, and Lewis the sixteenth and his ministers

 decided

decided on my departure. The miniſters of foreign affairs and of war, for I never ſaw but thoſe two, gave me the information.

Had I had thirty or fifty years of experience, which I think I have ſince acquired, I ſhould have held faſt to my objections, and ſhould have remained at home; but being only twenty-three years of age, I departed; determined nevertheleſs to preſerve the circumſpect conduct I had preſcribed myſelf. It will be ſeen by my four diſpatches from Brunſwick annexed, that the kind reception which the duke gave me, his converſation, which was intereſting, and ſometimes ſufficiently philoſophic to induce me to think that he approved of many things in the French revolution, led me to make overtures. It will be obſerved alſo, that having foreſeen the little probability of ſucceſs in this enterpriſe, I broke

broke ſilence only becauſe I had the certainty of producing an impreſſion, at which I myſelf was aſtoniſhed.

Thoſe who are well acquainted with the duke of Brunſwick, will readily perceive that my recital is exact, and will find his character in thoſe converſations; but a circumſtance which I ought not to have related at that time determined me more ſtrongly to open to him the ſubject of my miſſion. I was on the point of leaving Brunſwick without having ſpoken of any thing but the general intereſts of France with reſpect to the empire, when I heard the calumnious reports which were ſpread relative to the miniſter Segur at Berlin; accuſations of perfidious projects, of corrupted and ſcandalous meaſures unworthy of a free people, whoſe ſucceſs ought to be founded only on its ſtrength and its virtue. My ſilence would alſo have expoſed me to thoſe

vile ſuſpicions, and I ſhould have paſſed for a man who was labouring in the ſame ſpirit, and practiſing the ſame manœuvres at Brunſwick in a ſubordinate commiſſion, and of having only worn the maſk on account of the bad ſucceſs of Segur: I went therefore directly to the point, in order to clear up the whole.

It will be ſeen that the propoſition was received *more than decently* (plus que décemment), and that the anſwers of the duke left me room to return, and to dwell on it with probability of ſucceſs.

Soon after appeared that vitiated political ſyſtem, and which I am far from the ſelf-reproach of not having oppoſed, which armed all the princes of Europe againſt us, and drew us ſome months after into a general war.

A few decrees adopted by the legiſlative aſſembly with reſpect to foreign powers, deſtroyed the hopes which I ſtill re-

tained;

tained; and I wrote, that no further ideas must be entertained of ſucceſs. Such was the concluſion of this buſineſs.

Leſſart and Narbonne * had written to me in the moſt flattering manner on the opening and progreſs of the negotiation; and I anſwered them, as may be ſeen by my diſpatches, that having ſeen the duke of Brunſwick again after fifteen days abſence, I had found him totally changed in his diſpoſitions.

Some perſons then ſaid, that the object of this miſſion was to operate a change of dynaſty in France in favour of the duke of Brunſwick. This report, I am told, had circulated in England, and aroſe in the beginning from the diviſions between Lameth and Narbonne. In thoſe kinds of quarrels every means of doing injury are employed with too much indifference. This ſecret and concealed project has

* See their letters, which I received at Berlin.

 ſince

ſince been imputed to Narbonne. The idea never came into my mind; and beſides I believed, and had every reaſon to believe myſelf ſufficiently ſecure againſt any apprehenſion of this ſort, by the agreement and formal conſent of Lewis the ſixteenth, and perhaps ſtill more by the equal adherence of the two miniſters Narbonne and Leſſart, who were enemies, and who would not have failed to take advantage of ſuch a ſuſpicion to have oppoſed and ruined each other, if there had been any foundation for ſo doing. As for myſelf, could I have been the inſtrument of ſo abominable a project as that of giving new maſters to my country! Could I traffic with its throne, or its liberty, to ſerve the purpoſes of my own ambition, or that of any one in the world! I ſhudder at the thought; and knowing no other foundation for the report than the idle aſſertions of men whom the patriots have long ſince proſcribed, I do not

not imagine that ſuch a ſuſpicion can be formed againſt me in their minds.

The order to go to Berlin, and replace Segur, met me at Brunſwick. Our affairs were there ruined. I was therefore placed in a moſt difficult and critical ſituation. I thought however, that being already as it were in the place, at an epocha already too long delayed, it was my duty to go. A circumſpect yet open conduct was my ſafeguard amidſt this ſtormy career. But the political ſyſtem of that period, which did not fail to gain ſoon a conſiderable aſcendancy, and which from the firſt days of the adminiſtration of Dumourier drew on the declaration of war againſt Auſtria, left it altogether impoſſible for me to begin any important negotiation with ſucceſs. I refer for what remains, to my diſpatches, where it will be ſeen that I had to ſucceed a man whoſe miſſion was for peace; that the new adminiſtration had

had changed the fyftem; that the acknowledged difpofitions of the Pruffian cabinet, which I had carefully obferved and minuted, impofed on me as my fevereft tafk to combat with our own government, and to deftroy and refute a thoufand falfe fuppofitions, a thoufand falfe hopes. But my difpatches contain every thing, abfolutely every thing: I can only add fome private letters, by which I endeavoured to fhew the impoffibility of gaining any attention to various arguments which were pointed out to me with great confidence, and various means by which they flattered themfelves that the king of Pruffia would adopt our new political fyftem. I did not conceal a fingle moment what the intentions and fteps of the cabinet of Berlin were; and I was not a little furprifed on my return to hear Dumourier, who had overwhelmed me with compliments on my mode of

feeing

ſeeing and judging, ſay with a tone of aſſurance, in the drawing-room, "Yes, the Pruſſians are on their march; but you will be much aſtoniſhed when you ſee that it is *to aſſiſt us in deſtroying the houſe of Auſtria* *."

[The remainder of this intereſting memorial of Mr. Cuſtine is filled with affairs that concern only himſelf. He ſays that the ill ſtate of his health, on his return from Berlin, obliged him to retire to the country, and that he had never diſcovered the leaſt ambition to obtain any conſiderable employment. He ſpeaks alſo of the letters which he wrote to Le Brun, on the maſſacre of the French

* Dumourier ſent to Berlin while I was there, and which he made a myſtery to me, an agent impowered by him to make propoſitions which I had combated in many of my diſpatches. The ſucceſs of this miſſion, of which I was informed by chance, proved to him that I was not deceived.

troops

troops at Frankfort.] "Since that time," he continues, "a few letters to my father, in which I ſpoke of his ſituation, of the line of conduct which he had to obſerve; different conſiderations, in fine, on which he ought to fix his attention in order to ſecure ſucceſs, have been the only meaſures in which I have indirectly intereſted myſelf in public affairs. Sometimes he has commiſſioned me to urge the expedition of certain demands which he had made, and I fulfilled his orders punctually; and, ſituated as I was, I neither had nor could have any more intimate knowledge of his plans and operations. I do not ſpeak of them, nor can I enter into that ſubject at this time. Hiſtory will judge them. I could wiſh to have written this paper in a manner leſs confuſed, and leſs incomplete; but the neceſſity I was under of keeping no papers by me, obliged me to leave thus imperfect this

necessary preface to the following dispatches." [Those letters and dispatches are under the national seals, and cannot yet be obtained.]

No. II.

No. II.

I ALSO saw the experiments which Marat published on light and fire, and which had excited my curiosity. The independent character which that man, since become so noted, displayed, induced me to seek his acquaintance, and we became intimately connected. Marat related to me certain circumstances of his life, which increased my esteem for him. He held himself forth as the apostle of liberty, and had written when in England, in 1775, a work on this subject, which was entitled *The chains of slavery.* In this publication he unmasked the corruption of the court and of the administration. The work he told me had made a great noise in England, and that he had been rewarded by valuable presents, and by his admission into corporations, and the freedom of several cities. He spoke to me of his connection with the

the celebrated Kau man; of his prodigious ſucceſs in practice; which was ſo great, that on his *debut* at Paris he was paid thirty-ſix livres every viſit, and had not time ſufficient for all the conſultations to which he was called. Though he was very well lodged, I did not ſee that ſort of luxury which might have been the reſult of the wealth that was ſhowered on him. But I have already obſerved that I was habitually credulous; and it is only in going over the different circumſtances of my connection with this deteſtable man, in bringing into one point of view the part which he has acted in this revolution, that I have been convinced of the quackery which through his whole life directed and veiled his actions and his writings.

Marat told me, that having made great diſcoveries in natural philoſophy, he quitted practice, which at Paris was the profeſſion only of a quack, and unworthy

of

of himſelf. But while he renounced his profeſſion he ſold from time to time remedies and bottles, the efficacy of which he warranted, and he was very careful to name the price. I recollect that, a wart on my hand having ſtruck his eye, he ſent me a bottle of very limpid water, for which I thanked him, and aſked him the price, which was twelve livres. I made no uſe of the remedy. Marat had given me ſome miſtruſt, if not of his ſucceſs, at leaſt of his medical knowledge. He told me one day, that, in order to cure himſelf of the colic, he wanted to have his belly opened, but that, happily for him, the ſurgeon had not the complaiſance to comply with his deſire.

Marat was ſo entirely full of himſelf, of his diſcoveries, and of the glory which he fancied he deſerved, that he did not appear to me to feel the ſlighteſt impreſſion of beauty, and he was certainly little calculated to pleaſe. Nevertheleſs, he

had

had found the ſecret of exciting an attachment in madame la marquiſe de L——, a woman whoſe elegant mind rendered her converſation highly intereſting. Being ſeparated from her huſband, who was overwhelmed with debts, and diſhonoured by a courſe of infamous conduct, ſhe put herſelf under the care of Marat; who did not confine his attentions to her as a phyſician, but was ambitious of ſucceeding the huſband. This union for a long time aſtoniſhed me. The lady was ſoft, amiable, and good; and there was nothing ſo diſguſting, violent, and ſavage in domeſtic life as Marat.

I muſt do him the juſtice to obſerve, that the rigour which he exercifed againſt others, he exerciſed alſo on himſelf. Inſenſible of the pleaſures of the table, and the enjoyments of life, he conſecrated all his time and his money to philoſophical experiments. Employed night

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and day in repeating them, he would have been contented with bread and water, in order to have the pleaſure of humbling at ſome future day the academy of ſciences. This was the *ne plus ultra* of his ambition. ' Enraged at the academicians, who had treated his firſt eſſays with contempt, he thirſted with the deſire of vengeance, and to overturn the firſt of their idols, Newton; for which purpoſe he employed himſelf wholly in experiments deſtined to deſtroy his principles of optics. To combat and overthrow the reputation of celebrated men, was his ruling paſſion: ſuch was the motive which dictated the firſt of his works, his treatiſe on *the principles of man*, which appeared in 1775, in three volumes, and which Voltaire burleſqued in his queſtions on the Encyclopædia.

The ſyſtem of Helvetius was then in the greateſt vogue, and it was againſt Helvetius that Marat wiſhed to enter the

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lifts. Certainly Voltaire was in the right to ridicule some of the propositions and extravagancies of Marat, but he did not do him justice in other points of view.

The academicians, for instance, were violently animated against his experiments on light, on fire, and on electricity; and I have never seen any of them distinguish or acknowledge what was new or valuable in his experiments; nor did they wish his name even to be pronounced, so fearful were they of contributing even by their criticisms to his celebrity. I own that this injustice on the part of the class of experimental philosophers has always disgusted me; and this was what dictated a chapter in my treatise on truth, on academical prejudice, page 353, which I composed at the end of a long and warm dispute I had with the geometrician La P——, which chapter is a faithful recital of this dispute. La P—— might possibly be in the right,

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and I might anſwer with too much harſhneſs; but I could not bear the inſolence and deſpotiſm with which they treated a philoſopher, becauſe he did not like themſelves wear a gown.

I followed Marat's experiments for three years; and I thought that ſome eſteem was due to a man who had buried himſelf in ſolitude to enlarge the bounds of ſcience: not indeed, that this was his firſt view; for he regarded only himſelf, he ſpeculated on the ſciences only for his own glory, and was anxious to raiſe his reputation on the wreck of that of others.

He had not failed to obſerve, that journaliſts were privileged diſtributors of fame; but his vanity, inſolence, and arrogance, had made him totally neglected by thoſe whoſe good offices he ſought after. He knew that I was connected with many amongſt them; and I believe it is to this circumſtance that I was indebted for that kind of attachment

which

which he professed for me for so many years. He was continually sending to me extracts from his works, and criticisms written on them with his own hand. I never could have conceived that any one could have had the impudence to bestow so many praises on himself; but considering him only as a person suffering under literary oppression, I exerted myself in making his works known, and I often succeeded. He never thanked me; and the reason was, that in spite of my esteem for his knowledge and his discoveries, I did not fully share in the admiration which he complaisantly felt for himself; and being sometimes in doubt as to the truth of his propositions, I undertook to soften his exaggerations, especially in the praising parts. This modesty which I felt on his account he never forgave.

As I earnestly wished for his success, I continued to bring him new acquaint-

ance to fee his experiments. I know not by what fatality, every one left his houfe very well pleafed with his philofophical feats, and very ill fatisfied with the philofopher. He expreffed himfelf with difficulty, his ideas were confufed; and as his vanity was eafily awakened by the flighteft oppofition, or the leaft fign of contempt or indifference, he became fuddenly enraged, and his fury rofe to fuch a height, that his ideas were difordered, and he loft his recollection. I faw one day a ftriking inftance of this inflammability: Volta, fo celebrated for his experiments on electricity, was very curious to fee thofe which Marat announced as overturning the theory of Franklin; but fcarcely had he repeated a few of them, and heard one or two objections, than, fufpecting Volta's incredulity, he infulted him grofsly, inftead of anfwering his objections.

He was however confcious of his

difficulty in ſpeaking, and of his want of temper in converſation, which were the reaſon why he ſought the acquaintance of a literary man who had abilities for ſpeaking, and who could diſplay his theory for him; after which he would have appeared in his temple like a god, to receive the incenſe of ſimple mortals.

He made me this propoſition ſeveral times. I objected on account of my timidity, and my ignorance in experimental philoſophy. He promiſed to initiate me in a ſhort time into the moſt abſtruſe myſteries of his diſcoveries. I conſtantly perſiſted in my refuſal, becauſe I did not wiſh to be any man's ſecond; becauſe I never had any very ſtrong paſſion for that branch of knowledge; becauſe I did not think myſelf ſufficiently ſkilled in making experiments; and in fine, becauſe my feelings led me rather to ſhun Marat, than become more intimately connected with him. Curioſity, and the

wiſh to procure information, had made me ſeek his acquaintance; the deſire of being uſeful to him, becauſe he ſeemed oppreſſed, had induced me to keep up that acquaintance; but he had never inſpired me with any of thoſe ſentiments that conſtitute the delight of friendſhip.

It was from a ſentiment of humanity that I procured him the ſale of his books, and little cheſts of inſtruments; from the earneſtneſs which he diſcovered in collecting the little profit of his works, I judged that he was in diſtreſs, although he had too much pride to acknowledge it. Alas! this ſervice, which I did him gratuitouſly, has ſince furniſhed him matter for treating me with the moſt atrocious inſults in one of his numbers. So far was I from withholding the money for his works, that I would have ſhared my purſe with him, had I then been provided for myſelf.

I have at all times done juſtice to

Marat,

Marat, and I will continue to do ſo, though I owe to him a part of the perſecutions which I am now ſuffering. He was indefatigable in labour, and had great addreſs in making experiments; a tribute which I heard Franklin once render him, who was enchanted with his experiments on light. I cannot ſay ſo much on thoſe for fire and electricity. Marat thought he had made diſcoveries which overthrew the ſyſtem of Franklin; but Franklin was not the dupe of his quackery. Le Roy, the academician, who was named commiſſary to examine his diſcoveries on light, agreed that thoſe which he had made on the priſm were ingenious, and that Marat had a ſingular talent in making them. His report was in many reſpects favourable, but ſome of the academicians forced him to ſuppreſs it.

Marat was moſt earneſtly ſolicitous to obtain an eulogium from the academy

of ſciences, and this earneſtneſs ſuggeſted the idea of a ſtratagem which coſt him immenſe labour. He undertook making a new tranſlation of Newton's Principia on optics. This was a new mode of deſtroying the ſyſtem; for I have no doubt but that he made alterations in tranſlating it. He wiſhed the academy to give their approbation of this tranſlation; but his name would have excited their ſuſpicions, and led them to examine the work with more ſeverity. In order to avoid ſuſpicion, he propoſed to many of his friends, to lend him their name; and he ſucceeded with Bauſſée, the grammarian, a weak and eaſy man, who was not aware of Marat's manœuvres. With Bauſſée's name, the commiſſaries of the academy did not heſitate to give, without reading, their approbation and praiſes to the work of their enemy. I cannot tell what advantage he reaped from it; for this tranſlation is unknown,

known, though it is magnificently printed. Marat made me a prefent of a copy of it on vellum paper in the beginning of the revolution.

At this period Marat was poor, and lived wretchedly; and though fince my return from America I have not conversed with him, I do not think that he has changed his principles. He is accufed of venality and corruption; but I have never forborne repeating, that he was above corruption. Marat had but one fingle paffion—that of being foremoft in the career which he was running. Anxiety for fame was his difeafe, for he had not that of avarice. He was of a bilious habit, and paffionate in his difpofition, obftinate in his fentiments, and perfevering in his conduct. We may judge of his perfeverance from one trait—that although he was under the greateft embarraffment in fpeaking, he has neverthelefs exhibited himfelf in every tri-

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bune. He forgot every thing in purſuit of his favourite object.

His earneſtneſs to obtain his ends made him employ all ſorts of means, lies and calumny of every kind: he was an actor in every thing. He defended the people as he defended truth in natural philoſophy; not for the ſake of being uſeful to the people, for Marat deſpiſed them, but in order to accompliſh his deſigns. He found flattery the beſt mode of obtaining the ſuffrages of the mob, he therefore flattered them: had tyranny promiſed him better ſucceſs, he would have preferred it: but a man muſt be a tribune before he becomes a tyrant.

All his motions were thoſe of a mountebank. He looked like a puppet, whoſe head and arms were moved at the will of the puppet-ſhow-man. Every thing was abrupt and unconnected in his diſcourſes, as well as in his geſtures;

becauſe

because nothing proceeded from his heart, but all from his head, and every thing was artificial.

Marat loved no man, and had no belief in virtue. He was ſelfiſh, never beſtowed praiſe on any writer, and ſeemed as if all talents and all genius were concentred in himſelf. He very ſeriouſly imagined that he alone was capable of governing France, and intruſted it in confidence to ſome friends, who were obliged to ſupport the party which protected him, for the chiefs of which he had the moſt profound contempt.

I have ſaid that he was daring; notwithſtanding which, he was not brave. He had neither the courage of a gladiator, nor that of a philoſopher; though he wanted one day to fight with Charles, becauſe he had not ſpoken with reſpect of his experiments; and he was continually talking of blood, and challenging the whole world. This rhodomontade

never

never imposed on me, for I had seen him too nearly. He was violent, but not courageous; under despotism he was afraid of the Bastille, and since the reign of liberty he has been always in fear of prisons. I shall mention two traits on this head to shew his character.

Marat in 1780 was a candidate fo the prize given by the œconomical so ciety of Berne on the question of the re form of the criminal law. This society delayed every year pronouncing its judg ment. In 1782, I advertised my collec tion of criminal laws in ten volumes Marat begged me to insert the memoi which he had addressed to the society There was a boldness in this essay whic might prove disagreeable to governmen I asked Marat if he wished his name t appear. "By no means," answered h "for the Bastille is there, and I do n much like to be shut up:" and he le me to run the chance, as my name w at the head of the collection.

I met him one day in the Thuilleries, in 1786 or 87: it was a long time since I had seen him. We talked of his works, I asked him why he was so bent on pursuing natural philosophy, when he had against him all the academies and all the philosophers. I advised him to consecrate his labours to politics. "It is time." I observed to him, "to think of overturning despotism: join your labours to mine, and to those enlightened men who have sworn its overthrow, and this undertaking will cover you with glory." Marat answered, that he would rather continue his experiments in peace, because philosophy did not lead to the Bastille; and he made me understand very plainly, that the French people were not sufficiently ripe, nor sufficiently courageous, to support a revolution.

When the Bastille was overthrown, Marat was no longer afraid of it, and quitted his cave. He even pretended at

this

this period, that all the honours of this glorious revolution belonged to himself; and making up some sort of story about a colonel of dragoons whom he had arrested on the Pont-Neuf, he entreated me to print it in the Patriote François. He bestowed so many extravagant praises on himself in the account, that I could not carry my complaisance so far. I therefore struck out the praises, and published the fact; which Marat never forgave. As he despaired of finding journalists who would flatter him, he undertook a journal himself, which I advertised with an eulogium, in order to get him subscribers: and in doing him this service, which I never refused to any of my brother journalists, I thought I did service to the public. Good God! how great was my error! and what was my surprise, when I read some of his numbers! How was it possible that a writer who had any respect for himself could become so degraded as

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to make uſe of a ſtyle ſo vile, ſcandalous, and atrocious!

I own that I thought Marat a mean writer, an inconſiſtent logician, incredulous as to morals, ambitious, an enemy to all men of talents; but I did not think that he would violate every principle, every law, ſo far as to calumniate the moſt virtuous men, and preach maſſacre and pillage . . . . . I ſtop here . . . . . And I finiſh with this reflection: Whatever injury Marat may have done me, I forgive; but I can never forgive him for having corrupted the morals of the people, and having inſpired them with a taſte for blood; for without morals and without humanity there is no republic.

I have thought it right to enlarge with reſpect to this man, becauſe he is better known from that part of his life preceding the revolution than that which followed. Since 1789, he has been conſtantly

ſtantly on ſtilts; before that period, you ſaw him at home, and more like himſelf.

In ſpite of the provocations of Marat, I have never thought it right to reveal to the world the circumſtances which I have juſt related. Perſonal diſcuſſions have always been diſagreeable to me, and ſeemed to me only fitted to ſerve the purpoſes of the enemies of the revolution.

No. III.

No. III.

WE find innumerable teſtimonies in favour of this incomparable man. A perſon of ordinary humanity would have refuſed ſo diſagreeable a poſt, but Benoit was a *hero in humanity*. His noble ſoul calculated only the quantity of good which he might be able to do in this ſituation in preference to any other, and the evil which he could prevent; both of which were attended with imminent danger to himſelf. He was not indeed expreſsly choſen for this function; but being in poſſeſſion of the place of concierge at the palace of the Luxembourg before the revolution, he was continued in his employment. Benoit is a native of Switzerland; he was born in a beautiful little village named Chamberlen, in the county of Neufchatel, at the diſtance of a league and a half from the town. I have had the ſatisfaction to relate to his

ſiſter, an honeſt farmer's wife of Chamberlen, all the good that was ſaid and written about her brother, and I tranſlated thoſe paſſages from miſs Williams's letters. She wept for joy, and exclaimed with enthuſiaſm and exultation, that ſhe would relate to every one in her village all the good things that were ſaid of her brother. As a mark of her gratitude, ſhe brought me from her home her apronfull of excellent *moyel*, a ſort of fruit the name of which I am unacquainted with.

I take occaſion to add, that this excellent perſon was carried at length before the revolutionary tribunal, for the exerciſe of ſome act of humanity towards one of the miſerable victims under his care. He eſcaped; and, by one of thoſe ſingular providential occurrences which ſeemed to have no direction but that of chance, I was the happy inſtrument of his being ſaved. The commiſſary who arreſted him, and upon whoſe report

and

and evidence his fate was ſuſpended, happened to be my viſitor at the moment; and I did not forget at this critical period the obligations my family owed to Benoit. The commiſſary reſpected my repreſentations and my entreaties; the report and the evidence were ſoftened, and Benoit's life was preſerved; which would otherwiſe have been forfeited, for he had in truth been guilty of the act of humanity with which he was charged.

Benoit is a proteſtant. He told us, when we were firſt his priſoners, that he had been accuſtomed to ſee us every Sunday at church; and we probably owed part of the ſuperior kind treatment we experienced to this conſideration. We had the beſt apartments in the Luxembourg, which we ceded to the former ducheſs of Orleans, who remained in quiet poſſeſſion till the fall of Robeſpierre.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.